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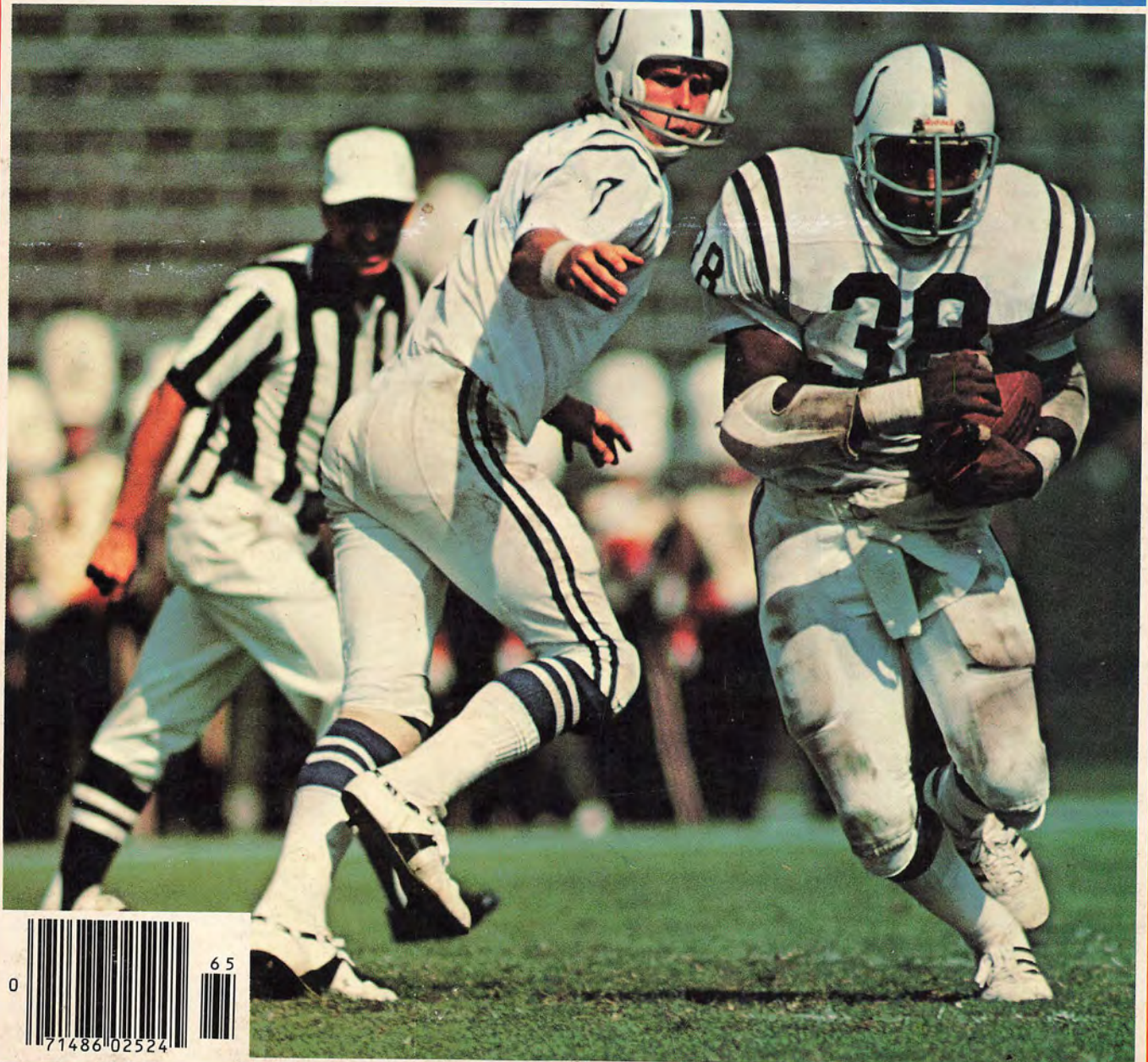


PRO FOOTBALL

1976 ANNUAL

**Joe Thomas/Ted Marchibroda
Baltimore's Odd Couple**

The Pro Football Encounter • Heart of the Eagles • Wally Chambers • Jack Lambert • 1976 NFL Schedules • Prospectus • Predictions • Is the NFL Stifling the Defense? • Official NFL 1975 Statistics







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COVER: The Baltimore Colts are our cover team of the year, following their record-paced rise last year from 2-12 in '74, and from 1-4 at the start of the 1975 season. With the *Odd Couple*, Joe Thomas and Ted Marchibroda, looking out over the field, quarterback Bert Jones takes charge of an exciting offense that was prolific on the 1975 NFL scoreboards. Photo by Peter Read Miller, cover design by Dick Fischer.

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Our theme this year is... **THE ENCOUNTERED GAME**

Encounter. It's a word with many meanings, and most of them apply to some facet of professional football.

It's a popular word, and its use is on the verge of increasing.

There's a new well organized movement in the United States called "Marriage Encounter," and it's growing fast. Imported from Spain, the encounter in this country has found expression through three religious segments: The Roman Catholic, the Episcopal denomination and the Jewish faith.

As "Marriage Encounter" proliferates, the single word "encounter" will become more and more a part of a much used segment of our language.

Encounter—A meeting with a person or thing, especially when unexpected. This meaning applied to several incidents described in Jerry Green's keynote story.

Encounter—A hostile meeting; battle; contest. Bob Oates found this definition meaningful as he searched out his story of the unfair battle between the NFL offenses and defenses.

Encounter—To come across, unexpectedly. Mike Rathet's story of the magnificent Philadelphia Eagles' journey into humanity reveals a most unexpected series of efforts to offset an unexpected problem. It's a meaningful word to the Eagles.

Encounter—To meet each other in conflict. Richard Kucner found a natural encounter situation between Joe Thomas and Ted Marchibroda, the Odd Couple of the NFL. But this particular encounter has bred success.

Then, of course, there's the basic encounter on every scrimmage play as heads butt heads and pads crack pads across the neutral zone.

Encounter—It's an interesting word. Stay with it, if you will, for the next 91 pages.

Chuck Benedek



HALL OF FAME PHOTO CONTEST
FIRST PLACE WINNER COLOR FEATURE
BY RON SCRIBNER, IRVING, TEXAS



HALL OF FAME PHOTO CONTEST
FIRST PLACE WINNER B&W ACTION
BY CHARLES TRAINOR, MIAMI NEWS



THE ENCOUNTERED GAME

THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE IS ONLY ONE PLACE WHERE CONTACT IS NOT A FRIENDLY PAT



BY JERRY GREEN

ENCOUNTER I—Player vs. Fan

Joe Kapp fled across the border from Canada in a worn mackinaw. Long before, somewhere, he had lost the belt. He came across, like an Okie headed west in Steinbeck's novel, rolling in an antique 1939 LaSalle. There was a jagged scar on his jaw, a souvenir from a barroom brawl, and there was a frog in permanent residence in his throat.

This was the late Sixties after Pete Rozelle had wiped pro football to a glistening sheen with chamois legerdmain and charmed rhetoric.

Joe Kapp stripped away the mystique and the ad agency aura in which pro football pretended to bask. Pro football had become Park Avenue. Joe Kapp was Gulch Valley in Tombstone or Las Cruces.

He captivated us romantics who had grown to adore this violent Sunday game. He did not do it with a suave, polished style, but because he was Joe Kapp. There was no veneer. He was gruff and genuine.

He drove to practice in the antique he had pieced together himself. He wore the dingy white mackinaw with the red and black stripes and the empty belt loops.

When he threw the football, it fluttered and twisted. It soared like a duck loaded with buckshot pellets.

Joe Kapp never bothered to grip the laces of the football when he threw it. He disdained the classical flourishes of Bart Starr and Johnny Unitas and those sophisticated quarterbacks.

Joe just grabbed the football anywhere convenient, then flung it. Most of the time it was caught. Even if it arrived in the receiver's midriff end-over-end instead of spiral.

Kapp brought the jump pass back to pro football. He'd reconnoiter the defense, scramble around a bit and then vault the ball over a destructive tackle.

He played for the Vikings and not long after joining the club from Canada he was sent in to play against the Rams. Joe called survey the defense.

"Okay, you big so and sos," said Joe in his croaking voice, "here I come."

And he did.

If a defensive tackle stood between him and the goal, Joe Kapp would helmet-butt the defender in the gut and plow onward. Sometimes he took off around the flank. Quarterbacks didn't run much then, except from fright. Starr didn't. Unitas didn't. Sonny Jurgensen never would. Kapp did. He'd create danger for the linebacker in his path. One

victim, Jim Houston of the Browns, was flattened unconscious when he encountered Kapp in the open field. It looked like the bull winning against the matador in a bullfight.

Kapp did not lead by sweet persuasion and cajolery. He grubbed and yelled and the Vikings won a championship and went to the Super Bowl.

"Forty for 60," Kapp shrieked in his grating voice. It became Minnesota's impassioned motto. It meant 40 comrades delivering hell to the opposition for 60 minutes. He was voted the most valuable

Viking when the club won the NFL championship in 1969. Kapp attended the banquet where they sought to press a trophy into his hands.

"There is no most valuable Viking," Kapp said in his hoarse tone. "There are 40 most valuable Vikings."

They played as one in the Sunday encounters.

He refused to accept the trophy.

Joe Kapp was a pioneer all right.

All his romantic rah-rahs turned into a bitter glop of hypocrisy.

His contract expired. The selflessness



for teammates evaporated. Kapp drifted to the Boston Patriots. He forsook his comrades in Minnesota. Forty for 60 became hollow, shallow, without meaning. The Patriots paid him more than \$100,000 to throw his dumpy passes.

But he would not sign a formal document, even though it guaranteed him \$600,000 for three years. All his teammates and all the other athletes in his profession agreed to sign such a binding contract. But Joe Kapp would not. Pete Rozelle ordered Kapp from training camp because he would not sign the standard players' contract.

And Joe Kapp, thus, pledged his allegiance to another encounter. He went to court, the symbolic figure of labor vs. management. He disappeared into the Sierra Diablo and became a reclusive mountaineer. He went to Hollywood and became a cinema actor. He served up beers as a tavern proprietor in Vancouver.

But he refused anymore to throw footballs which fluttered and twisted as though they were ruptured ducks. The 600 grand be damned.

The labor vs. management encounter has stultified professional football, the glistening sport, throughout these 1970s. The indentured athlete has become the metaphor for the oppressed slave of the 20th Century. Management, in turn, is befuddled by the laws of the land. It believes it is exempt from following the doctrines which govern other businesses. The parties have slugged it out for years.

In the courtrooms, the players' gripe that the Rozelle Rule restricted liberty by dictating compensation was upheld by a judge's decree. The jurists, familiar with Constitutional rights and monopoly laws, continuously favored the athletes.

Just before Christmas 1974 William T. Sweigert, a United States judge in San Francisco, issued a preliminary finding in Joe Kapp's antitrust suit. Sweigert, in 28 pages of legal mumbo-jumbo, said the Rozelle Rule, the draft, and all sorts of strictures concerning player-management relations were illegal.

Kapp had sued for \$450,000 in back pay and damages. And the judge said his cause was just.

But a jury of human beings—people like those who watch the Sunday encounters—listened to Kapp's pleadings of mistreatment and slavery. The people decided Joe Kapp did not deserve a plug nickel.

Forty for 60 resulted in a net of zero.

And what was proven was this: The teams can encounter each other on Sunday and Monday night; the players can encounter their bosses; the networks can encounter each other every week-end with glib voices and pretty faces; the owners can encounter each other with their petty debates... but the entire football conglomerate had best not encounter the people whose money buys the products and pays the wages.

ENCOUNTER II—Player vs. Player

The long face below Jack Lambert's blond hair turns scarlet when the emotions surge. The words run rapidly, and the language is scarlet, too.

Lambert is the youngest and most volatile of the Pittsburgh defenders. Now it was the aftermath of the colossal Super Bowl X. Lambert's face remained flushed from hairline to lantern chin.

"I feel we were intimidated in the first half," he spewed. "Pittsburgh is a team that should intimidate."

It was a super Super Bowl for the first time. It was because of the quaint strategy of bombburst plays. And it was because of the hostility of the combatants as the Steelers and Cowboys thrashed at each other.

A flubbed field goal normally is the most boring of the failure events during a football game. But that is when the course of intimidation changed. Jack Lambert changed it, from Dallas' favor to Pittsburgh's. He did it with brute muscle when the face turned scarlet and the words ran rapidly from the angry mouth.

Briefly, Dallas led 10-7 in a game that was fading early in the third period. Roy Gerela missed, for the second time, a score-tying field goal. He failed, but still Dallas' Cliff Harris grabbed the slight kicker and twisted and wrestled him. Lambert, the angry protector, flung Harris from Gerela. He dispatched the attacker, tumbling.

"Harris jumped up to Gerela's face and rapped his helmet," said Lambert. "I felt we were being intimidated. I just grabbed Harris and threw him down."

A teammate grabbed Harris and steered him from Lambert. Jack Fette, the line judge, seized Lambert and moved him bodily from Harris.

"Get out of here," Fette said.

"I'm sorry," Lambert said to the official. "I was just getting a bit emotional."



1. Joe Kapp dominated the encounters on the football field, but lost in his encounter with 12 jurists who decided he didn't merit \$450,000.

2. Did the Cowboys' Cliff Harris cost Dallas SB X? His encounter with Gerela caused Jack Lambert (58) to encourage a Steeler turnaround.

The game turned. Now Pittsburgh had won again in this Super Bowl X, 21-17. But the scarlet remained in Lambert's face.

"I sure quieted down when the official grabbed me and said that," Lambert said in the aftermath. "Things were going on out there. Somebody had to do something to stop it."

"Cliff Harris is like me. He plays the game rough. He's my kind of player. Which makes me dislike him more."

"They had a middle linebacker I didn't care too much for," said the Cowboys' Randy White. "He was hitting late and big mouthing out there. I wasn't too impressed with him."

"I come from back east and all the time I lived in Baltimore I always thought of Pittsburgh as a dirty city, a crude city and a blue collar town," said Jean Fuggett, who played with the Cowboys and now is a Redskin.

"And that's exactly what I think of their football team, the way they played out there. This is a team in love with themselves. My thoughts are that the wine of success has intoxicated the

Steelers. There were a lot of incredible cheap shots taken out there."

"Everybody had talked about how dull the Super Bowl was, how bad," Jack Lambert said. "Well, the fans finally got one."

ENCOUNTER III—Owner vs. Owner

Carroll Rosenbloom was on a journey to the Orient in the winter of 1970 when his football coach left him. Rosenbloom had discovered Don Shula and made him a head coach. There was success for the Colts, though they lost the third Super Bowl to the Jets.

And then on this day while Rosenbloom was away the telephone rang in Shula's home in Baltimore. It was an intermediary. The man had phoned, he explained, at the behest of Joe Robbie, owner of the Dolphins. Robbie wanted Shula as his coach despite the commitment to Rosenbloom.

Don Shula was enticed. The money was better and there was a piece of the action offered in the package. Shula defected... and then Rosenbloom arrived

home in Baltimore. His phone rang.

"Carroll, this is Joe Robbie," said the caller.

"I don't want to talk to you about anything," Rosenbloom responded.

He hung up, slamming down the receiver.

The league meetings were in Honolulu at the beach on Waikiki. Shula, the new Miami coach, approached Rosenbloom, hand extended. Rosenbloom glowered at Shula—and turned his back.

"It's like this," Rosenbloom said then. "I have not talked to Robbie or Shula since this happened. I will not talk to Robbie or Shula ever again. One stole something from me. The other allowed himself to be stolen."

ENCOUNTER IV—Coach vs. Owner

Don Shula coached the Dolphins to three Super Bowls for Joe Robbie in Miami. The Dolphins won two of the three. One season, the Dolphins played their entire schedule and the entire postseason without defeat. They were 17-0. Such success was unprecedented.



Victorious teams have victory banquets. The Dolphins celebrated their second victory in the Super Bowl with such an occasion. The date was April 26, 1974. Robbie sat himself down at the head table. He basked in the glory. It did not matter that Carroll Rosenbloom had snubbed him. The people of Miami adored the Dolphins and they were winners and profitable. The people waved their white handkerchiefs, their show of adoration.

Robbie looked along the head table and smiled at the others. He noticed that Don Shula and Mrs. Don Shula had not yet been seated at the table. They were late, perhaps mobbed by the people.

"We've got 1000 people waiting on you," said Robbie to Shula, according to Morris Siegel, the Washington raconteur who was to be master of ceremonies. "Let's get up there."

"Don't ever yell at me in public again," bristled Shula, "or I'll knock you on your . . ."

The Dolphins have not returned to the Super Bowl, but that fact is coincidental.

ENCOUNTER V—Player vs. General Manager

"Lawyers have ruined this sport," Russ Thomas is wont to say.

Thomas is a bluff man who was a nondescript lineman once for the Lions. Through years of maneuvering Thomas worked himself to the position of the general manager of the football club.

1. Don Shula's encounter with Carroll Rosenbloom made him a head coach. His encounter with Joe Robbie earned him better position and silence from Carroll.

2. Rosenbloom's encounters with Shula and Robbie are marked by silence.

3. Joe Robbie, owner of the Dolphins, wanted Shula and got him—angry!

4. Ron Jessie caught 41 passes for Carroll Rosenbloom's L.A. Rams last year. He might have done the same for Detroit if it hadn't been for an encounter with GM Russ Thomas.



Salary negotiations between player armed with attorney and a general manager become a poker game. It is pure poker with audacious bluffs, furtive peeks and sly strategy.

Last summer, Ron Jessie, a pass receiver of skill, sat in a meeting chamber in the law offices of Robert L. Fenton in a skyscraper in downtown Detroit. Thomas and Fenton had played poker on many occasions. On one occasion, a few years before, Fenton had said: "You get over \$50,000 with Russ Thomas and his hand absolutely starts to shake."

On this day in Fenton's office, Jessie proclaimed he would no longer play football for the Detroit Lions. He had played out his option in 1974 and was a free agent. His salary had been \$16,000 the year before when he played out his option. The Lions offered Jessie \$60,000, \$65,000 and \$70,000 for three years. Jessie turned it down. He felt he needed to be recompensed for past inequities.

Thomas is an angry poker player who has difficulty bluffing. There is not much strategy nor the ultimate rationale of a temperate compromise. He suggested, according to Jessie, that the player ditch his attorney. To Jessie, Thomas suggested an act of disloyalty.

"He treated me like a dumb slave," said Jessie. "Like I didn't know what was happening."

Thomas, too late, protested he had been misunderstood.

"There's no way I'm going to come back here," said Jessie. "Russ and I didn't have a relationship."

"He was running a con game on me. I'm from the streets, man. I know when somebody's running a con game on me."

A con game differs from a poker game.

A few weeks later in Los Angeles attorney Fenton met with Carroll Rosenbloom, who had been irate when the Dolphins tampered with Don Shula and signed him. Fenton and Rosenbloom reached an accord. Rosenbloom had traded franchises and owned the Rams. Jessie signed with the Rams.

ENCOUNTER VI—Commissioner vs. the Judges

A few years ago Pete Rozelle said the worst thing about being commissioner of pro football was the profusion of litigation. Rozelle mentioned more than 20 cases on the dockets of the courts of America.

He was prepared to enplane for Minneapolis the day the Rams signed Ron Jessie from the Lions. In Minneapolis, the decisive case between pro football's management and the NFL Players Association was about to begin. At issue was the legality of the Rozelle Rule.

"Jessie caught a lot of balls," Rozelle said the day the receiver moved from Detroit to L.A. The possibility existed, under the strictures of the Rozelle Rule, that the commissioner would be forced to award compensation from the Rams to the Lions.

"We'll see what a prize receiver goes for," Rozelle said. "Obviously, prior

trades affect you . . . experience, age, statistics, films.

"Hopefully, it will be decided between the clubs."

The Rams and Lions disagreed on the worth of Jessie. They were incapable of deciding.

Rozelle invoked the rule bearing his name. He awarded the Lions Cullen Bryant, who had been a reserve runner for the Rams.

Bryant did not care to run for Detroit. He ran to his attorney instead. The attorney ran to the courtroom. He hollered about antitrust and claimed the Rozelle Rule was illegal.

Within a month, U.S. District Judge Warren Ferguson decreed that Rozelle had acted beyond his authority. Ferguson ordered that Bryant could remain with the Rams, that he could not transfer to Detroit.

The Rozelle Rule was beaten in Los Angeles, as it had been in Judge Sweigert's courtroom in San Francisco seven months earlier. Soon the Rozelle Rule would be beaten again in the court in Minneapolis.

ENCOUNTER VII—Owner vs. Owner

It has been Pete Rozelle's character not to commit bloopers in judgment. His aptitude for conciliation was his strength. It made pro football strong.

The commissioner bloomed terribly the day he attempted to transfer Cullen Bryant to the Lions instead of the ultimate No. 1 draft choice. His decision was prompted by the mewling of the Lions. They had communicated with Rozelle and insisted upon Bryant. Rozelle cannot afford to be sympathetic. This time he was and it was an error.

The Lions had had an uneasy relationship with Rozelle for more than 10 years. He had suspended Alex Karras in 1963 and fined the franchise in a severe punishment. The friendship ceased then.

Bill Ford of the Lions is an involved owner, like Rosenbloom. He can be caustic and sometimes humorous. Once he had encountered his coach, who was then Harry Gilmer, with a critique after a loss. Ford said: "We weren't only outplayed; we were outcoached." Now his club had lost Jessie and it had failed to get Bryant. Ford sniffed chicanery by Rosenbloom. He accused Rosenbloom of influencing Bryant's choice after Rozelle's decision. Ford called Rosenbloom a hypocrite in a letter. He then released the letter to the press.

"You have done more to harm professional football than anyone in the history of the NFL," Ford wrote.

"Several weeks ago you testified in Minneapolis that the Rozelle Rule was necessary to maintain 'competitive balance' in the league.

"You have made a mockery of the compensation rule, and yet, it was your behavior several years ago in the R.C. Owens case that caused the compensation rule to be adopted. Your 'allegiance' then was with Baltimore, but time changes all things."

Carroll Rosenbloom blistered when he

read Ford's letter and blistered more when the contents were published in the daily paper.

"The charges contained therein are ludicrous, irresponsible and untrue," Rosenbloom stated in rebuttal. "For example, Ford wrote that I intimated that Cullen Bryant would be given a starting position if he remained with the Rams. Anyone who knows anything about football knows that a player must earn a starting job. It is not given to him."

ENCOUNTER VIII—ABC vs. NBC vs. CBS

"I couldn't work for NBC or CBS," said Alex Karras from ABC's Three Stooges. "They want shills."

NBC and CBS do their work on the Sunday encounters and their own encounter has existed since Super Bowl I. It is ratings and they are alike. They have some glad mouth do the play-by-play and some guy who played line in a leather helmet drive you to sleep with his commentary.

The NBC/CBS encounter is settled by the video, not the audio. If you have Pittsburgh vs. Cincinnati on NBC and Philadelphia vs. Chicago on CBS, you have no problem choosing. The Nielsen spread is off the board. Same if CBS goes Rams vs. Cowboys while NBC filters Cleveland vs. San Diego onto your Cyclops.

It is the same drool, unless you're lucky on Sunday and draw an analyst with the wit of Wayne Walker or the incisiveness of Hank Stram. But NBC and CBS give you football. On Monday night, ABC provides showbiz first and occasionally some football. CBS responded in this electronic encounter with a safety blitz. Last year it put Archie Bunker and "All in the Family" one-on-one against ABC's Monday Night Football.

Alex Hawkins, who has been in and out of the television picture, said this a couple of years ago. It hasn't changed.

"ABC is the only network doing anything different," said Hawkins of the

most expensive and most bitterly contested encounter of all. "CBS and NBC are staid and stand on tradition. The young fellows want to change it, but not the chiefs of staff."

It is not too often the quality of the game competition is strong enough to squelch the incessant, metallic, stentorian, pompous, pretentious blather of Howard Cosell.

"Cosell is a great talent," says Karras, who once had weekly hate encounters with quarterbacks. Quite often the quarterbacks he encountered played on his own team.

In ABC's realm of Monday night showbiz with football in the cameo role, there is no gray middle. You either love Howard, Alex and Frank Gifford. Or you hate them so much, you turn down the sound and try to catch the audio via radio.

Karras tells the story of the time in Buffalo, where in season they throw snowballs at the athletes. This was early. Somebody flipped two cherry bombs into the ABC booth, populated by the Three Stooges and countless Hollywood folk imported for between-plays interviews.

"One cherry bomb hit Gifford and the other hit me," Karras said. "I jumped 40 feet in the air when it went off. But when I came down, Howard was standing there triumphant."

"They aimed at me, Greek," Howard says with a smug look on his face. "But they never touched me."

There are more encounters. Last year Joe Willie Namath encountered a fine for missing curfew before a Monday night game. Joe Willie hates to miss any bit of showbiz and this time he was benched for a while. Alex said something, Howard said something else in another language.

Joe Willie responded. Karras became "that big, dumb tackle." Cosell was bleeped by Joe for "trying to make all football players and coaches look like fools."

And there is the rumor of the greatest encounter of all: That Giff and Howard keep squashing each other and at any

time, perhaps on a Monday this year, there will be an eruption.

As Karras says, "the thing about ego is that it can really screw you up if you don't control it."

ENCOUNTER IX—Agent vs. Owner

Over the two years when the Dolphins won two Super Bowls, there was no



more menacing athlete in football than Larry Csonka. For money he went to the WFL, which failed in its encounter the NFL. For money now he was negotiating his return.

Don Shula had this to say: "There's no question of Csonka's value to our team and of his contribution in the past."

Joe Robbie one day soberly counted up some figures presented by Ed Keating, who is Larry Csonka's agent. By twos and fours the figures came to a sizable sum. Robbie thought it was an

outrageous sum. So he announced the demands of Csonka's agent to the world.

1. A salary of \$250,000 a year.
 2. A \$50,000 cash bonus for signing.
 3. An annual bonus in cash of \$15,000.
 4. A 20-year loan of \$125,000 at the minimum legal interest.
 5. Separate compensation and an expense account for public relations service during his playing career.
 6. Separate compensation to perform certain scouting and coaching consultant activities for 10 years after retirement, plus a minimum monthly expense allowance of \$500.
 7. Eight first-class roundtrip airline tickets during each playing season between Cleveland-Pittsburgh and Miami, which may be used by anyone designated by Csonka, plus one roundtrip ticket each year for members of Csonka's family.
 8. Game tickets, transportation and expenses, plus additional fringe benefits.
 9. A luxury automobile and a luxury, furnished two-bedroom townhouse.
- This was all. Joe Robbie darted off some words, as is his habit. He said: "We have too much respect for our players and our fans to agree to Mr. Keating's proposal or to the approach it

represents.

"Shula and I would like to sign Larry to return to Miami if we can sign him at a salary consistent with the salary structure of the Miami Dolphins, which is the best in professional football. But Mr. Keating's proposal does not provide the basis for constructive negotiations."

Keating was outspokenly miffed that Robbie would reveal the demands in the public media. Then he immediately took Csonka to the Big Apple, where he would be appreciated with more respect.

"Miami made it into a public ax-grinding," Csonka said.

He signed a multi-year agreement to lug footballs for the Giants. Miami, with no more Rozelle Rule, could not demand the Statue of Liberty and the Empire State Building in compensation.

The Dolphins like Joe Kapp, got nothing.

And Wellington Mara, the establishment-conscious owner of the Giants, got an attraction who can run with footballs like nobody else.

Ten years before the same Wellington Mara signed Pete Gogolak off the Buffalo Bills' roster. The signing triggered raids and recriminations and ultimately the NFL/AFL merger—and many, many different encounters.

1. Rams reserve running back Cullen Bryant didn't want to encounter the Detroit Lions and stayed in L.A.
2. The most expensive and bitterly contested encounter of all is focused on the network TV coverage of football.
3. Lions owner William Clay Ford didn't like losing Jessie and Bryant and focused news media on Rosenbloom.
4. Will there be a feudal encounter between Howard Cosell and Gifford?
5. Larry Csonka encountered obstacle in his planned return to Robbie's Miami Dolphins. His salary package was made public and refused, so he ran to New York and Mara's Giants.



"No one escaped his probing pen"

In his second appearance as PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL's keynote author, Jerry Green has revealed that pro football is, indeed, an encountered game. And no one category of people surrounding the game has escaped his probing pen, excepting, of course, the print media. (Thee and me, Babe!)

If the reader is new to the world of pro football, he might think, at this point, that all NFL owners exchange silent treatments with other owners. He might wonder if all high-priced quarterbacks throw ruptured ducks to their receivers and call it quits when they don't get a super salary, or if all talented running backs demand many special privileges for their families and friends as normal contract fringe benefits.

Hardly. But the encounters do exist, and in the instances presented by Green, they have influenced the game as precedents, psychological image changers or, in some cases, as encounters of legal significance. They are isolated instances, but important ones.

Also important are the NFL's positive

contributions to its own image and to the humanities. For example, the annual NFL/USO tour of Southeast Asia and the Pacific has introduced more than 100 NFL players to the isolated, hospitalized, and, in earlier times, the active front-line military personnel. This year, four more NFL stars, James Harris, Jack Lambert, D.D. Lewis and Lynn Swann, joined NFL executive Bill Granholm in visiting U.S. personnel in Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines and Hawaii.

The trip is not always a pleasant adventure. Conditions abroad are far from those normally chosen by affluent players between seasons. But those who participate make the adjustment for a short stay, knowing that the men whose spirits they are affecting have made a bigger adjustment over a longer period of time.

Later, on these pages, a special "plus" encounter by the Philadelphia Eagles players will offset further the image created by isolated negative encounters and by the rantings of the player association's non-playing leader.

At Canton, Ohio, the Professional Football Hall of Fame is a shrine for the positive accomplishments of the players, coaches, owners and other contributors. This year, three new members have been inducted into the Hall: Ray Flaherty, Jim Taylor and the late Lenny Ford. Flaherty was the Redskins coach of the Cliff Battles—Sammy Baugh era. Ford came up to the NFL at Cleveland through the old AAFC, and was, in his day, an awesome defensive end. Fullback Taylor was the all-important bread-and-butter man in Vince Lombardi's Green Bay offense of Super Bowl I and II days.

Who among the current active NFL players will make it to the Hall of Fame? There would seem to be a few cinches, like O.J. Simpson, Merlin Olsen, George Blanda, Fran Tarkenton, Paul Warfield and Charley Taylor.

How about some of the relative newcomers? For example, will Wally Chambers of the Bears have that kind of a career for enough years to make it to the Hall?

1976 HALL OF FAME ENSHRINEES



LEN FORD—END
CLEVELAND BROWNS



RAY FLAHERTY—HEAD COACH
WASHINGTON REDSKINS



JIM TAYLOR—BACK
GREEN BAY PACKERS

HALL OF FAME—CLASS OF 1975



ROOSEVELT BROWN
NEW YORK GIANTS

GEORGE CONNOR
CHICAGO BEARS

DANTE LAVELLI
CLEVELAND BROWNS

LENNY MOORE
BALTIMORE COLTS

***"A shrine for positive
accomplishments"***

INSIDE THE BEARS' CHAMBERS

ALL-PRO WALLY CHAMBERS' FAVORITE ENCOUNTER
GAME IS NOT FOOTBALL. IT'S LIFE



BY BOB MARKUS

Wally Chambers is a modern day Alexander The Great. Now awaiting the start of only his fourth professional season, the 6-6, 260-pound Chicago Bear tackle already has run out of worlds to conquer.

In his first season he was defensive rookie of the year. Last year he made All-Pro and played in the Pro Bowl game.

"I've already accomplished everything I set out to accomplish when I came to the Bears," he says. "Sure, I'd like to win a championship. But that is a team goal. No one man can control that. I don't consider Most Valuable Player a realistic goal. Alan Page is the only defensive tackle who ever won it. And the year he won it he didn't have as good a year as I had last year."

So now, Chambers hints, he may go

on to other things. To Wally Chambers, life is the encounter game. Football is only a weapon in the struggle. But in the massive hands of the Bears' giant defensive tackle it is a weapon of atomic proportions.

Chambers stands out like a diamond in a slag heap on a team that has gone from a national institution to a national joke over the last dozen years. But he needs more out of life than the grudging recognition he has gained from critics.

Historians tell us that when Alexander realized his age of conquest was over, he sat down and cried. But Wally Chambers did his crying years ago.

Besides, he still has his goals. They are not football goals. They are life goals. Quite frankly, Wally Chambers wants to make a lot of money.

The man who knows how to make

money, to him, represents what a professional athlete like, well, like Wally Chambers, would represent for your average young man. He has always been a worshiper of the Horatio Alger hero.

"Even when I was a kid," he says, "football players were not my heroes. My heroes were always men who had started with nothing and built something big. Men like the Rockefellers and Carnegies."

Chambers may not have his own sights set quite that high, but he does have a few business irons in the fire. "And as soon as I get things really going along, I'll quit football and tend to my business."

It's not difficult to understand why the captains of industry hold such fascination for Chambers. It's the same reason why the fat kid with two left feet would



idolize Willie Mays or Muhammad Ali.

Chambers grew up in gut-grinding poverty in Mount Clemens, Mich., a suburb of Detroit. His father had been a professional baseball player. With the Red Sox. But not last year's American League pennant winners or the Boston bashers of Ted Williams' day. The elder Chambers grew up in Alabama.

"He played in the old Negro league," recalls Wally. "I think his team was called the Phenix City Red Sox." But when the family moved to Mount Clemens, the father did not work.

"He could have worked," says Chambers, "but he didn't. Then he messed up his back and went on disability. We were always on welfare. We lived in shacks. We moved from shack to shack. We never had a home until I bought one for my parents when I signed my pro contract. We never had nothin'."

Now Chambers lives in a small, but expensive apartment on Chicago's North side. It is the kind that has a doorman and a security system and when you are finally buzzed upstairs you can hear all sorts of locks and bolts clanking and clunking before the door finally swings open. So much security!

"Yeah, they try," says Chambers, "but they still get apartments broken into." Anyone breaking into Wally Chambers' apartment had better hope they find the occupant not at home. Chambers' 260 pounds are so well distributed over his lank frame that he appears lean and lithe as a jungle cat.

The black dashiki-style dressing gown he wears adds to the image. The apartment is accented with several African

appearing sculptures which Chambers says actually are Jamaican.

He has a television set which plays incessantly and a stereo that plays when the television is not on. The television and the stereo are his main sources of entertainment.

"After a game," he says, "I like to come here and stretch out on the floor and listen to my music. I listen to the words and they help me. You saw in the movie 'Helter Skelter' how the words to a song can have a strong influence on someone. Well, say we've lost a game and I'm feeling sorry for myself.

"I listen to my music—to the words of my music—and I realize how much trouble there is, how much better I have it than so many other people. It makes me realize how many thousands of people out there would love to have what I have. Then I stop feeling sorry for myself because I lost a football game."

The big tackle has had ample opportunity to take solace from his music during his first three years with the Bears. The team that once was as synonymous with pro football as Al Capone is with the city of Chicago, has averaged more than 10 defeats a season, despite Chambers' commanding presence on the front four.

"I don't like losing," he says. "I never played on a losing team in my life until I came here." But he has learned to accommodate to what has become a simple fact of his life.

"The first three games we lost in my rookie year I sat down in the dressing room and cried," he says. "But then I got a grip on myself. Losing is part of life. You might not like it, but it's there. I had always held football separate from the rest of my life, but now I realized that it was all just a part of life.

"I can take the losing. What I find hard to take is the embarrassment. When you play for the Bears people treat you kind of funny. They look at you and say, 'Oh yeah, the Bears.' Writers and radio announcers treat us like a joke. Every time they write about us or read a story on the radio they always have to come up with a funny last line.

"I know they're doing their jobs, but you don't know what that can do to a player. They actually had Walter Payton doubting his own ability. And anyone who's seen Walter Payton knows he's going to be one of the best running backs in the game. But he actually was doubting his ability.

"Virgil Livers (rookie punt returner and cornerback) was ready to give up and

1. Wally Chambers, seen here crunching running back John Riggins (44), enjoys encounters—whether it be on a Sunday afternoon or . . .

2. Chambers didn't idolize football heroes as a kid in Mt. Clemens, Mich. He most admired industrial giants who rose from poverty to great wealth.

3. Wally enjoys encounters with stereo music while stretched out on the floor of his apartment, alternately involving himself with his TV set.



PHOTO BY DON LANSU

go home. That's how it can get to you. The only thing that sometimes makes you proud to play with the Bears is that we have this reputation where, even though we might lose, you know we're going to hurt you.

"Playoff teams don't like to have us on the schedule near the end of the season because they know that even though they'll probably win, they might not be in much shape to play next week's important game. I kind of like that."

Yet Chambers is not by nature a violent man. He is an avowed movie freak who goes to see every new film in town. "I like action movies and mysteries," he says. "The only thing I do not like is violence. I don't want to see a lot of blood. It turns my stomach. If I want to see someone killed all I have to do is go down in the streets. I've seen guys killed. Not here in Chicago, but other places. I walked out a door once and saw a dude getting killed."

"I don't go to movies for realism. That's why lots of time I like to see cartoons. Yeah, sure, there's violence in cartoons. But it's not reality. Those old-time comedians, like, what was his name? Charlie Chaplin. They showed that violence could be funny as long as you understand that it's not reality."

"So in the cartoons someone will come up behind a guy and hit him over the head and they'll show him seeing stars. Come to think of it, now, that IS reality. You take a hard blow on the head and you do see stars."

"It's happened to me 10 or 11 times playing football. It's a weird thing."

More often, Chambers is the starmaker. He has ambivalent feelings about dealing out punishment. "We're all playing this game together and trying to make a living out of it," he says. "If I hit a quarterback and really injure him so he can't play anymore, I'll feel very bad about it. It's not part of my job to injure a man."

"But if I just knock him a little woozy so he has to leave the game for a few plays or maybe the rest of that game, that IS my job. When I stick a guy I want to stick him hard enough to hear him say, 'Ooohhhh.' I want to hear him groan."

To hear those sweetest sounds this side of his Aretha Franklin albums, Chambers almost always has to fight through a double team block before going on a search and destroy mission. That's why he says, "I think my position is one of the most challenging on the team. I think what I have to accomplish is more difficult than a receiver running a pattern and catching a ball."

A man who believes in quickness and guile, Chambers nevertheless must use strength many times to power through the inevitable double team. "I'd say I'm double teamed 75 to 80 per cent of the time," he estimates.

That's one of the penalties of playing on a bad ball club. One of many. He does not have the luxury, for instance, of playing with the all-out ferocity that characterizes the play of a Mean Joe Greene.

"We don't have an experienced middle linebacker," he points out, "so I have to exercise a certain amount of caution. I have to be aware that if a runner gets behind me he may go a long way. There were two or three times last year when I reacted too quickly to a play that I thought was going outside. Then they broke the play back over the middle and the middle linebacker was outside, too. Those plays went for about 25 yards apiece."

"My rookie year Dick Butkus was still with us. He probably was over the hill and playing on one leg, but still the other teams respected him. I could be a little freer then."

But he still felt restricted by a defensive system that was unfamiliar to him and which he stubbornly resisted learning. "I would listen to the coaches in practice," he explains, "and try to do what they said. But you can't teach an old dog new tricks and when you get in the heat of battle you tend to go back doing things the way you know best."

"The problem was we were playing a system that was not suited to our personnel. It wasn't just me. We all hated it. There are some coaches who think their system is the best and they will use it whether they have the people to run it or not. I don't ever want to be a coach but if I ever did become one I would use a system that fitted the people I had."

"I've always played a split four defense, but Abe Gibron has us in an odd defense. I had a lot to learn and I made a lot of mistakes and you didn't hear much about Wally Chambers those two years."

Actually, Chambers has too much talent not to notice him no matter what kind of defense he's lined up in. But it wasn't always that way. "As a little boy I was short and fat," recalls Wally. "The other kids used to make fun of me and I became very introverted. I was what you'd call a mama's boy. I always stayed around the house. When she got a job I was the one who stayed home and took care of the rest of the kids."

"When I started high school, me and another kid were the shortest ones in the bunch that we used to—I guess you'd call it—run around with. Then I grew seven inches in one year. I didn't lose any weight, I just stretched it out. So by the end of that year I was the tallest kid in the group."

By his junior year in high school Wally began to come out a little socially. He played some junior varsity basketball and, of course, was on the football team. But college recruiters were not banging on the door of the family shack.

He got a few offers from some far distant schools, but heard nothing from schools like Michigan, Michigan State, and Ohio State which traditionally recruit



PHOTO BY BILL SMITH

hard in his area. His high school coach had played in the Ohio Valley conference and suggested that Wally try to get a scholarship to one of the Valley schools.

So with a teammate and a few cans of film, Chambers drove south. He visited Marshall, Morehead State, and Eastern Kentucky. "I got a scholarship offer every place I visited. Eastern Kentucky was the last stop and I liked it best."

Don't get the idea Chambers was the typical jock shopping around for a place to play football. He wasn't that serious about the game. "I didn't take football seriously until my freshman year in college. I got benched and it hurt my pride. I'd never been on the bench before. That's when I really got involved in football for the first time."

Chambers says the brand of football in the Ohio Valley was good. "The players were very quick, they just weren't as big as at the bigtime football schools." Except for Wally, of course. "I think I benefitted from playing there," he says. "I had to learn to play against smaller, quicker men."

To this day the guard he says gives him the most trouble is Miami's Bob Kuechenberg. "He's small and quick and experienced. He knows all the techniques. His size becomes an advantage

because with a bigger man I can rock him back on his heels but Kuechenberg is always up on his toes.

"Of course if a man is small and doesn't have the experience that Kuechenberg has then I have the advantage. I can use my height for leverage. I don't have the strength of a Joe Greene but my height gives me an advantage he doesn't have. Of course, you're not going to run over very many people in the NFL anyway."

Although Chambers notes that "we are called rush men, implying that our main job is to rush the quarterback," he feels he's equally adept at defending against the run.

Most defensive linemen enjoy going after the quarterback. Chambers relishes dropping a runner at the line of scrimmage. As usual, he is looking at it pragmatically. "We're paid to get the quarterback," he acknowledges, "but realistically-

ly we aren't going to do that more than a couple of times a game. It's a very difficult thing to do."

For the difficult things he does Chambers is beginning to be recognized as one of the best defensive linemen in football. But he points out that, "playing on a losing team, I don't get the recognition some others do. When people talk about the great tackles they'll say Merlin Olsen, Alan Page, Joe Greene, and that guy who plays with the Chicago Bears, that, uh, Wally Chambers."

If Chambers continues on his current path of progress a few more years will give him instant recognition, regardless of whether the Bears continue to lose. But there's always the chance he'll strike it rich in the business world and abandon the game that has been his biggest weapon in life's encounter game.

The Bears had better pray for a mild recession.

1. Chambers works hard at being the Bears' top defensive lineman, but has become stoic about being on a losing team—perhaps that'll change.

2. It may seem strange, but Chambers doesn't dig violent realism in movies. He likes action and suspense if it's light on blood-letting. Actually, that's a good description of football.

3. What makes Chambers' task tough is the almost constant double-team blocking he encounters.

4. But more often than not, Wally Chambers overcomes the two-on-one and makes his 6-6, 260 lb. presence known to the other team's offense.



PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER

PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER

"Where is the involvement?"

Wally Chambers plays defensive tackle with great intensity. When watching him make the play on the field, one finds it difficult to picture him as a man with his sights set on material things. But pro football has become very material.

A players' agent, getting 5%, 10% (or perhaps more) of the salaries of each of his clients, is as much into the material aspect of football as the man on Wall Street is into the material facet of life. There are agents—successful ones—rumored to have as many as 60 athletes as clients. If a 60-man agent gets 10% of the salaries of each of his players at today's sports wage levels (football, baseball and basketball players together likely average well over \$50,000 per player per year), that's \$300,000 gross per annum for that agent.

We won't go into other fringe benefits for the agent. But there are many.

The question is: To what extent can an agent really become involved with the ingredients of the spirit—love for the game, guts to play hard, determination to accomplish victory for the team, courage to fight back, compassion to care about the man across the line who belts you silly on every play—which created the pro game in the first place. Yet, agents strongly influence players, as do non-playing association leaders.

Chambers' boss emeritus, George Halas, craved sports as a young man. He played major league baseball. But he fell in love, and as the result of this love encounter with a most attractive young thing called football, Halas spawned the National Football League. It was born and grew up because of Halas' tender, loving care. Occasionally, his ethics were questioned, but never his fatherly love.

To maintain football in the vitally important world of emotion, today's teams must have front office executives, coaches, and as many players as possible who are unwilling to be dominated by the material, and who are willing to turn their love for the game into an undiluted dedication.

The Bears' head coach, Jack Pardee, loves the game. More than ten years ago, on a team going nowhere in the NFL pennant race, Pardee played no

small role in one of his team's rare wins. After the game, he sat on a storage trunk in the dressing room. Long after most of the players were showered and dressed, Pardee still sat, a big smile on a bright red face, saying aloud to no one in particular, "Great victory. Great victory."

Bears' general manager Jim Finks loves the game. "The Halas family has given me a lot of freedom to turn this franchise around," says Jim. "Yet they love the game feverishly, and are very supportive."

Finks' love relationship with pro football has given him some personal recall which one can bring out of him with a bit of teasing. Perhaps his most memorable game was December 16, 1951, at old Griffith Stadium in Washington. The Redskins, through three quarters, had built a 10-0 lead on a Sammy Baugh TD pass and a Bill Dudley field goal. But the Steelers had lost two "quarterbacks" as they were then erroneously called. Actually, they were tailbacks in the old Steelers' single wing offense.

Jim Finks, who had played the position in earlier years, was asked to replace the injured Joe Geri and Chuck Ortmann. As the Steelers' single safety, Finks went both ways through the fourth quarter—and ran wild. He scampered and passed the Steelers on a drive, capped by his own TD pass to Lynn Chandnois. Then he listened to a huddle suggestion by Elbie Nickel, talkative end, to run a sweep. Finks carried, and took the Steelers about 40 yards to the Redskin five, leading to a second TD. As an insurance score, he led another field-long drive to the Washington two.

Finks never scored. From the five and from the one, on the two drives, Fran Rogell and Joe Geri came off the bench (Geri limping) to do the scoring.

But newspaper pages hailed the sensational running and passing of the starting safety and third string tailback, Jim Finks, hero of the Steelers' fourth quarter, 20-point, game winning rally.

It was the last game ever played by a single wing team in the NFL. The T-formation, and defensive emphasis, had taken over.



"Defense can turn it around"



OFFENSE VERSUS DEFENSE

AN UNFAIR ENCOUNTER?



BY BOB OATES

A National Football League team today is in some important respects an encounter group. After a defeat, the offensive people often will blame the defense cogently and at length—and vice versa. But as teammates, they'll all close ranks a few days later for another confrontation with another enemy.

It has been shown, in other words, that between games, football players can analyze one another unfavorably—and in revealingly personal detail—without forgetting that the Big Encounter is something else: the game.

In pro football this is particularly true of winning teams, all of which share two things in common:

—Regardless of individual differences and lifestyles, they pull together at gametime. As Vince Lombardi said in the day of the Packers: "We love each other."

They didn't, really—jealousy is a stronger emotion on any football team than love—but on game afternoons, football winners invariably perform like men in love.

—Football winners tend to be powerful defensively. Indeed, the AFC's best defensive team usually plays the NFC's best in the Super Bowl each winter in the last round of a tournament involving the four strongest defensive teams in each conference. And the better of the two surviving defensive powerhouses usually wins the league championship.

At the outset of a given tournament there might occasionally be an interloper (as in the winter of '75-'76, when St. Louis got there with offense). But St. Louis was quickly eliminated, as it had been in the winter of '74-'75, when it also lost in the first round; and thereafter, the playoffs settled down to what they almost always are: tests of defensive prowess.

Coach Chuck Knox, a master of both defense and colloquial rhetoric in Los Angeles, sums up 1970s pro football in a typical Knox phrase: "Defense is the name of our game."

It hasn't always been. In the beginning, football was not a defensive party. Those whose memories or research go back to the turn of the century can point to many offensive eras in the old days when, in less complicated times, defense was played with an abysmal lack of science.

From the outset, the strategy of football has appealed to the game's better minds, but in its infancy 60 or 70 years ago there was so much to learn that nobody could master both offense and defense. And, not surprisingly, the most



PHOTO BY GLENN COOPER

dedicated coaches struggled first to improve offense.

They could see that with well-conceived attacks based on sound offensive formations and a few surprises, they could beat the best of the defensive teams every year.

So in the first three or four decades of this century, the good coaches tinkered mostly with offense. These coaches were recognized and identified nationally, as a matter of fact, by their offensive preferences: Pop Warner's double wing, Knute Rockne's Notre Dame box, Bernie Bierman's particular kind of single wing, the embryonic T formation of the Chicago Bears, and various other offenses conceived and implemented by men like A.A. Stagg, Hurry-Up Yost, Bob Zuppke, Howard Jones and their peers in a famous cast that is now only a memory.

Until World War II, the leaders in the profession of football coaching stayed with offense, moreover, until they had refined it just about to the limit. Before giving much deep thought to defense, they explored every avenue of offense because, in those days, that was the way to win.

Clark Shaughnessy played the most prominent role in the final two refinements—the emergence of the modern T-formation and the development of the three-end offense with two setbacks (replacing two ends and three backs). By 1950, these changes were in; and of-



PHOTO BY MALCOLM EMMONS

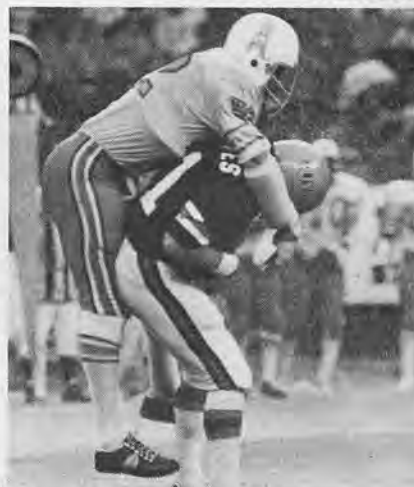


PHOTO BY MALCOLM EMMONS

fense, since then, hasn't changed a great deal.

It was obvious by 1950 that the T-formation was the only way to go in football and that all formations based on a direct pass from center to a setback were dead, except for a change of pace, and would never be revived barring an overhaul of the rules.

By 1950 it wasn't quite as obvious that three-end football so-called—an offense based on two wide receivers, one tight end and two running backs—would capture pro football. But there were those who perceived it then, including Shaughnessy and former Ram coach Hampton Pool and the men who believed in them, and by the late '50s their theories were not only prevailing in pro football but dominant.

As one result, the 1960 Philadelphia Eagles, with Norm Van Brocklin in charge of the attack, won with offense as the last NFL team of that persuasion to take the pro championship. In an unbroken string, defensively oriented teams have won ever since.

As of those days at mid-century and thereafter, the other result was that the game's top coaches increasingly turned their attention to defense. Lacking no more canvas on which to paint new offenses, they began to experiment defensively. And since the 1950s, all of football's great innovations have come on the defensive side.

The offense retains the one major advantage it has always had—gametime foreknowledge of the place and means of attack on every play, for lack of which all defenses suffer—but in nearly every other respect, the advantage today is with the defense.

It had taken the coaches some 50 years to master offense, but they've been accenting defense less than 25, meaning they're still making meaningful changes. Hence football today is a defensive game. When half of a complex sport has exhausted its resources strategically and the other half hasn't, the advantage remains with the people who are still

learning and experimenting. And in football today, you know who they are.

In 1970s football, in the encounters between offense and defense, defensive teams are particularly dominant in NFL games because the significance of defense is now better understood than offensive significance ever was.

It is only by hindsight that you can see it paid to be an advanced offensive theorist—a man ahead of his times rather than just conservatively keeping up—in the 1920s and 30s. The reasons for the present dominance of defense are, by contrast, much easier to comprehend, and, therefore, most coaches do comprehend, guaranteeing a game that is much more stereotyped (and, to some fans, dull) than it was in the offensive era of Warner and Rockne.

Items:

1—In football as in all the team sports of America (most noticeably baseball, hockey and basketball) defensive emphasis today rests on a simple premise: In order to win, you first have to keep from losing.

You concentrate first on recruiting good pitchers or goalies or defensive tackles not because defense excites spectators but in the hope that winning will excite them. And, with enough defense, you can keep from losing, i.e. you can win.

So the Dodgers keep looking for pitchers, and George Allen keeps trading draft choices for safeties and linebackers.

2—In football as in almost any other human activity, consistency is the key to success, and it is clear now that on the pro football level as well as in college ball, defense can be considerably more consistent than offense.

This is a fact that wasn't all that obvious in the 1950s, when ineffective man-for-man defensive assignments led sometimes to inconsistencies. In the present multiple-defense era, by contrast, when inferior defensive players can be hidden behind superior players (thus confusing offensive personnel), the best

offensive teams in the world make many more errors than a comparatively mediocre defensive team makes on a typical afternoon.

You can visualize the offensive problem by recalling your good and bad days on the golf course or tennis court. On some of your bad days, your putts and serves seem to be only an inch off—yet that's enough to keep you missing the hole maddeningly or, in tennis, hitting the tape.

Similarly, on a quarterback's bad days in the NFL, his passes may be only an inch off—yet that's frequently the margin between a complete and an incomplete. When, however, the defensive team is on the field, a linebacker blitzing the passer can be only an inch off as he rushes in—or even several inches—and still destroy his man with one arm.

Many a defensive end rushing off-balance or out-of-sync has managed nonetheless to sack the quarterback, sometimes while falling on his rear end, himself, involuntarily.

Defense, accordingly, can be and almost always is more consistent than offense (given a situation when motivations

1. Confrontation in the pits is not a glamorous pastime. When the Eagles and Rams met in L.A.'s Coliseum, all was not brotherly love.
2. The Raider's Willie Hall has guessed pass, and Cincinnati's Ken Anderson suffers accordingly. Defense is more consistent than offense under the rules.
3. This time it's Houston's Duane Benson sacking Wayne Clark, as the Cleveland signal caller also has to fight a snow storm.
4. The Saints' Kurt Schumacher has brought offensive muscle to the line, but NFL yards are still hard to come by, as Rod McNeil is buried by Rams.
5. Why prohibit offensive linemen from using hands—while allowing defense to do so? The 49er's Frank Nunley (No.57) doesn't mind a bit.



PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER



PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER

are similar). It is usually more consistent in spite of, or because, of the fact that defense is an incredibly imprecise science by comparison with offense.

To move a football team down the field in the NFL these days you need a highly skilled, finely tuned lineup. To stop a run or pass, on the other hand, what the defense mainly needs is an aggressive, enthusiastic lineup with the hustle to pursue the ballcarrier until it drops him.

In short, it takes great talent and timing to play offense well—but you can play defense pretty well if your only long suit is enthusiasm. And in a contact sport like football, it's a lot easier to find or develop enthusiastic than talented athletes.

3—A good NFL defensive team today uses as many as 18 coverages in the same game along with a number of different fronts, and, tactically, it is this web of alignments that makes offense so hazardous now and defense so dominant.

By definition, a front is the way the defensive linemen and linebackers position themselves at the snap of the ball. There are two basic NFL fronts, a four-man line with three linebackers or a three-man line with four linebackers—but basic alignments are infrequently used these days. The so-called front four (the defensive line) may actually incorporate only one rushing lineman or as many as seven or eight.

A coverage, by definition, is the way deep backs and linebackers line up to defend against threatened passes. Defensive teams may cover the five eligible receivers man for man or they may divide the field into as many as eight zones—five short zones, perhaps, and three deep. They use differing numbers of zones. At times, they also zone half the field and play man-for-man defense against potential receivers on one side of center or the other.

The objective of these multiple-defense tactics is to make fronts and coverages difficult for the quarterback to decode or read. And this objective has been realized so often by so many teams in recent years that offenses have lost most of their power of movement. Because it is so dangerous to pass, they spend most of their time hammering at the defense with their running backs. Long-gaining ground plays are out of the question against good defenses because the pursuit today is scientifically organized. Offensive football reduces itself, therefore, to a series of attempts to make ball-control marches.

Specialized substitution is a major part of multiple defense in the 1970s. On first-and-10, an NFL defense deploys its 11 best all-around defensive players. On second-and-10, it adds a pass-defense specialist or two, or three, and on third-and-5 it changes again. On second-and-2, the defensive personnel on the field tends to be entirely different from the alignments for third-and-7 or first-and-10.

For several years, the Miami Dolphins shifted automatically into a 3-4 defense

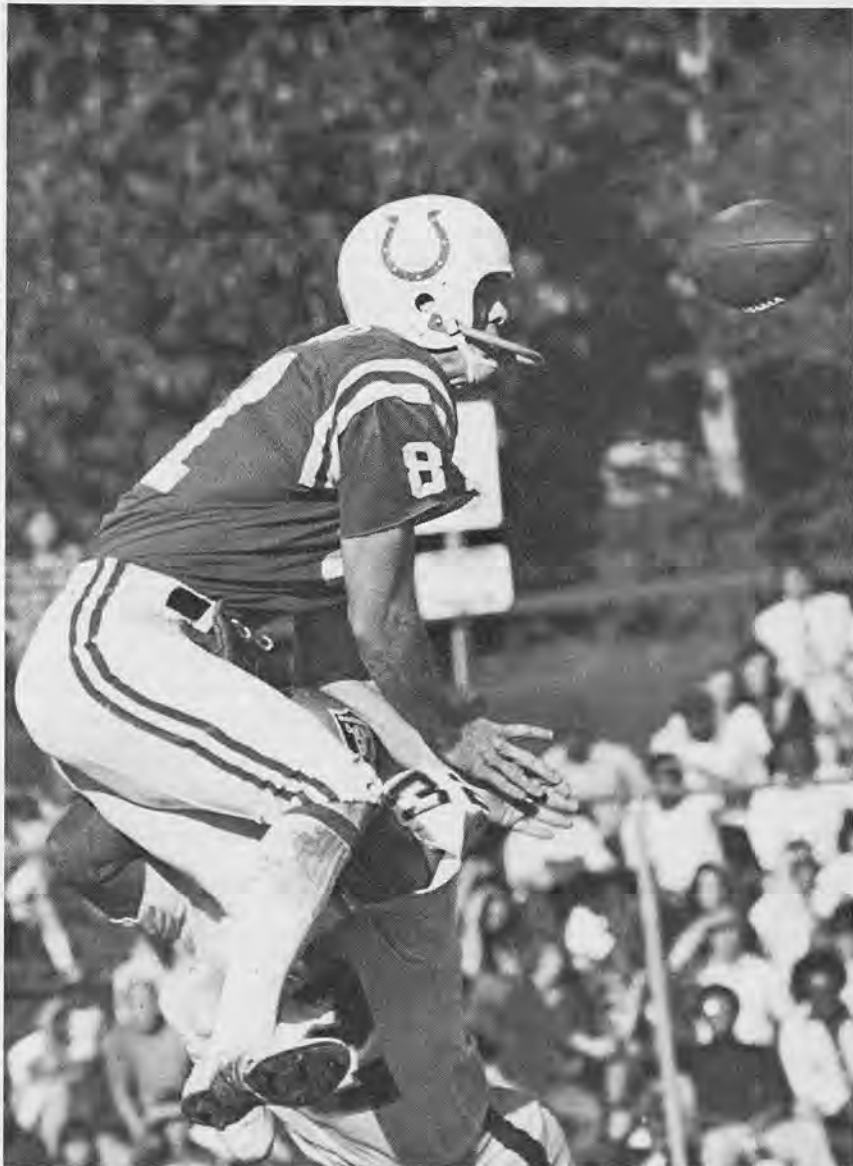


PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER

on second-and-long—but last season, when the Dolphins sometimes favored a 3-4 on first down, they changed to a 4-3 on passing downs to get a stronger rush on the passer.

Offensive teams, by contrast, find it hard to make specialized substitutions or radical changes of formation. They can add a wide receiver or, alternatively, a second tight end—and in power situations they can add a running back—but these simple changes aren't comparable to the way defenses can load up against offenses.

It is difficult, for one thing, for the offense to make more than one specialty substitution at a time. Second, any change in the offense increases the potential for mistakes—the kind of mistakes that are so disadvantageous to offense in any case, when the first team is on the field. Offense is like a nicely tuned violin. When a string is replaced, the entire instrument has to be retuned into harmony with the new string. And that takes time.

For all these reasons, defensive teams today are increasingly dominating foot-

ball, which can only be improved by rules changes.

4—It is the rules that make football what it is. And barring a revised rulebook, it seems out of the question any more for offense to regain parity with defense—the parity it theoretically had up to Van Brocklin's year in the championship match, 1960.

One of the strangest things about pro football is that in a league presumably needing exciting games to tempt public patronage and television sponsors, the rules are weighed heavily in favor of defense.

The so-called eight or nine major changes effected two years ago haven't had and can't have a major influence on the game. As a package, they've brought but one positive tactical improvement—better field position—and so more touchdowns are now being scored. If, on the average, an offensive team gets the ball 60 yards from the payoff end zone instead of 70 yards, it will score more touchdowns.

But there has been no intrinsic im-



PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER



PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER

provement in the way NFL teams grind out their touchdowns.

They're still afraid to pass; they're still unable to get off long-gaining running plays; they're still ball-control teams; in short, they're still doing business the same old way.

If, meanwhile, they can't kick as many field goals as they used to, it's questionable if that has improved the game. Football needs a three-point play. There's nothing wrong with a field goal set up by a brilliant long pass. The NFL problem was and is an offensive inability to move the ball by any means but short runs (and a few short passes).

From a rules standpoint, the principal reason for defensive dominance these days is that the defense can place any number of players on the line of scrimmage—for instance three, leaving eight to play zone defense—whereas offensive teams must position seven of their 11 on the line of scrimmage on every play.

This is an absurd, unfair disparity. At their option, defensive teams can outnumber the offense in the secondary, doublecovering every potential receiver to insure that a completed pass is virtually impossible.

What purpose is served in giving this advantage to defenses? Do spectators pay to watch defenses? If the offense is required to put seven players on the line of scrimmage, shouldn't the defense be forced to deploy at least four players there?

The rules specify further that offensive linemen must stay on the line of scrimmage on pass plays. Defensive players can go anywhere. Is that fair?

From end to end, the rulebook is honeycombed with biased passages assisting defenses and hamstringing offenses. For example, when the ball is snapped, only one offensive man can be in motion and he may not move forward except under circumstances that are of only marginal assistance to offenses. By comparison, as the ball is snapped, all 11 defensive men can be in motion in any direction, including forward. Is that fair?

Indeed, defensive players are lawfully permitted to jump forward repeatedly—trying to draw the offense offside—and aren't penalized unless they make contact with an enemy or unless they have crossed the plane of the ball when it's snapped. One offensive man in motion vs. 11 defensive men—is that fair?

What's more, if the offensive player so much as moves an ear when a defensive man is jumping around before the snap, the offense can be penalized five yards. Is that fair?

If defensive teams are dominating football today because of the way the rules are written—and demonstrably, they are—why persist with an unjust rule which allows defensive people to cross the neutral zone before the snap and prohibits offensive linemen from doing the same thing?

Why allow defensive linemen to use their hands on offensive players, while, at the same time, offensive linemen are prohibited from using their hands to hit defensive players?

On pass plays, why is it legal for any of the 11 defensive players to catch the ball and illegal for most offensive players to catch it?

In all fairness, it would seem that at least one extra offensive man should be a legal receiver. The present rule was written before anyone dreamed that defense would dominate NFL games to this extent. What's needed is the kind of rule that would authorize a sixth receiver—meaning, for example, that in a typical formation, the quarterback could legally throw to either of two backs, two wide receivers or two tight ends.

This would break the tyranny of zone defenses; but if all other rules remained as they are, it still wouldn't appreciably affect the dominance of defense.

For it is the total impact of the rules that devastates modern offenses. Thus passers can be legally belted after the ball is gone. Kickers can't. If a punter or place kicker is touched after the kick, the touching team is penalized regardless of whether, in the judgment of the officials, the defensive man could have stopped himself before making contact with the kicker.

Quarterbacks are given no such benefit under the rules. If the referee thinks it would have been "impossible" for the defensive man to stop before hitting the passer after the ball has been thrown, it's the passer's tough luck. And a smart defensive man will make it "impossible" to stop before smashing the quarterback. Why stop? The rules don't protect quarterbacks. At worst, the penalty is a few yards.

Now of all the plays in football, punts and placekicks are the least exciting. In any case, they're less exciting than a completed pass. Yet the NFL protects its

1. One wonders how the official saw love pat, administered by Raiders' Jack Tatum on Colts' Roger Carr—while the ball was in the air.

2. Defense has a favored status under current rules, and offensive backs must sometimes revert to interesting gestures—this one by Franco Harris.

3. With Dallas' Ed "Too Tall" Jones on a defensive rampage, there's not much the Rams' (No. 75) John Williams can do. Jones even has help coming.

kickers as if they were entertainers and exposes its quarterbacks as if they were not.

Quite possibly, in so doing, the NFL rules people (the club owners) are (perhaps subconsciously) getting even with quarterbacks for costing them so much money. Perhaps deep down they have an old-timer's mentality on this issue and would rather see a punt or field goal than one of these new-fangled forward passes.

But their motives don't really matter. What does matter is that in persisting with a rulebook that is plainly unfair to offenses, they are insuring the dominance of defense.

NFL owners won't even allow their passers legally to throw away the ball when their receivers are covered. Organized baseball, smarter on this issue than football, allows waste pitches. But perversely, the NFL doesn't.

For the NFL, its position on this issue is a foolish one to take. It is, first, foolishness because every passer throws the ball away often. And the more crooked the quarterback, the more often he throws it away. The advantage goes to the quarterback who is most artistically crooked.

If a good citizen like Roger Staubach makes it look like an errant throw, he isn't penalized for deliberately breaking the law. He is complimented by his coaches instead; they heartily approve of the way he made a crime look like an innocent pass that somehow got away.

In this manner the NFL encourages its most famous players—those most emulated by youngsters—to wink at the rules. Astonishingly, the league persists in encouraging and honoring scofflaws.

Even more significantly (in the context of aiding offense by evening up the rules) thrown-away passes, if legalized, would help break the NFL's defensive dominance. At present, a pass that's deliberately grounded (in the judgment of the officials) costs a down as well as penalty yards—and there goes the offense for that series.

In sum, the defense gets all the breaks today in pro football. A Sunday afternoon encounter in the NFL isn't a fair encounter. Both groups, offense and defense, are playing the same game, and playing to win, but if the squads are of equal ability and equally well coached, the offense doesn't have a chance.

An NFL game today, any game from September to January in the Super Bowl, is nothing but a test of sheer defensive prowess.

"Would Whizzer White and Bill Dudley be heroes today?"

Defense is so important that even when a team leads the NFL in rushing and total offense, such as Buffalo did in 1975, the absence of defensive superiority drops that team down a notch or two in effectiveness. Had offensive statistics told the story of success in 1975, Buffalo and Baltimore would have fought it out for the AFC championship.

Bob Oates' analysis of the evolution of defensive superiority makes a fan wonder if the offensive star of 40 years ago would be a hero today. Would Whizzer White and Bill Dudley be as effective against a George Allen defense as they were against the one-platoon teams of their era?

In the cases of White and Dudley, probably not, excepting that two such great athletes likely would be stars today on defense, where their lack of modern size would not wipe out their potential. Recently, at a National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame Regional Awards dinner, at which a dozen graduating (from high school) scholar/athletes were honored, one young student was asked by the MC whether he expected to continue his outstanding football career at the college level. His reply was, "I hope so, but I guess I'm kinda small."

Later, part way through the moving keynote speech of the evening, Tom Harmon leaned a little closer into the microphone and addressed himself to the small scholar/athlete. Tom's voice was quiet, but as strong as the Harmon image. "Don't you ever let anyone tell you that you're too small to play this game," said old 98. "If anyone ever hints at such a thing, you ask him if he ever heard of Bill Dudley or Whizzer White. They were small, but they had the same kind of a heart you have, and the same kind of love for success you have shown, on and off the field. They were

great successes. You can be, too." In this admonition, Harmon was expressing his great love for the game he never has abandoned, and his warmth of feeling for anyone with ambition. He could have whispered, and all 500 in the house would have heard.

The tiny scholar/athlete with the high-grade point average smiled and then self consciously lowered his eyes. It could have been the high point of his life.

Tom Harmon was the sixth Heisman Trophy winner (1940) after a great career at the University of Michigan. In the eyes of your editor, Tom was the most exciting collegiate football player of all time. We have stated this observation publicly many times in the past 35 years. And we are convinced that had not World War II created a six year gap between his collegiate and NFL football careers (a man can get a little out of shape when he doesn't play for six years), Old 98 would have been the greatest running back in the history of professional football. His combination of speed, shiftiness, balance and uncanny sense of how to find the open field was never equaled after his college career. Even today, watching old films of Harmon's highlight collegiate runs brings 98 chills a minute. He was that exciting.

Harmon's competitive spirit has stayed with him. As a sports broadcaster he has been a success at the national level. Behind the scenes and often at his own considerable expense, he has fought for the rights of the sports news radio broadcaster, who often had been relegated to third-class citizenship behind the play-by-play men and the print media.

His hard-hitting approach to his profession has belied a sensitivity which those close to him have come to respect. As one friend said, "I found out

that I wasn't the only one getting Tom's personalized Christmas cards. He has sent out hundreds of cards each Christmas, addressing them himself and appending the messages and signature in his own handwriting. This, despite an affluent office with plenty of secretarial help. Tom cares, personally, about people, and his loyalty is a trademark."

Anyone who chooses to say that these accolades to Tom are offered because of the new promotional tie-in between this publication and Tom's new football newspaper (see inside back cover) are wrong. The reverse is true. The PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL has become involved with Tom's newspaper because of a long-standing admiration for the man and for that which he plans to offer the football readers across the nation.

Yes, Forrest Evashevski will be involved, again. Harmon, loyal after 35 years, will revive the old runner-blocker team of Harmon and Evashevski. On the field, at Michigan, they complemented each other perfectly. Personality-wise, they could have been called "The Odd Couple."



"Harmon and Evashevski— together again"



BALTIMORE'S ODD COUPLE

THEY LAUGHED WHEN THOMAS AND MARCHIBRODA SAT DOWN AT THE PIANO TOGETHER, BUT JOE AND TED TURNED A CLOSE ENCOUNTER INTO CLOSE HARMONY—AND SUCCESS



BY RICHARD KUCNER

They were labeled pro football's Odd Couple, "The Lion and the Lamb," a crazy combination that could never work out.

An encounter? Hell, it would be all-out war if the nice, quiet Polish fellow ever dared disagree with the tough, tactless Yugoslav who had hired him.

Or so it seemed.

But somehow, Joe Thomas and Ted Marchibroda combined to lead the Baltimore Colts to the greatest turnaround in NFL history in 1975. And along the way, each man proved he wasn't quite like the public portrait painted of him.

First there was Thomas, who wields the terrible swift sword like nobody else in the business. Within three years, he went through enough coaches and players to stock a new league. He disposed of Baltimore's heroic legends like Unitas, Matte, Mackey, et al, and most of them went out kicking and screaming with bruised egos. The team had four head coaches within three seasons, and being an assistant was even more treacherous than holding the top job.

At the same time Baltimore, which hadn't had a losing record in the 15 years preceding the arrival of Thomas, quickly plunged to the deepest part of the NFL basement with records of 5-9, 4-10 and 2-12.

Who was to blame? The bull's-eye between Joe Thomas' eyes presented an inviting target. He became as popular in Baltimore as taxes, inflation and the heartbreak of psoriasis. An extremely vocal Joe Thomas Hate Cult was spawned, with one faction mixing the tar and feathers while another took care of braiding a rope. TV commentators and sports writers rolled out the heavy artillery and shelled him unmercifully. "If his work in this town is any indication, Joe could dismantle the Steelers in a day while leaving the Oakland Raiders for his lunch hour," wrote a columnist in the Baltimore Evening Sun, the most persistent of his critics. "How did Colt football sink to this level?" asked that newspaper's sports editor. "Everyone knows the answer to that one—a new owner and a new general manager ripped apart a good, veteran team and replaced it with the one in last place in the AFC East. They did it, of course, thinking it was the intelligent thing to do. But after three years their progress continues on a downhill slide, which tells you something about the programmers' intelligence."

One writer labeled Thomas "Der Fuhrer," but what worried the Colt boss even



more than press criticism was the collapse of ticket sales. When Thomas arrived in 1972, season ticket sales totalled 48,600. Within three years that collapsed to 28,500. The Colts lost not only fans but entire communities. In suburban Pikesville, for example, where Colt season tickets had been highly prized possessions left in wills by one generation to the next, 95% of the ticket holders cancelled.

The jeering section wanted Thomas' head, and it was expected Ted Marchibroda might unwittingly deliver it to them. In 1974, Thomas' idea of a head coach was Howard Schnellenberger, whose supervision produced a 4-13 record before team owner Robert Irsay stepped in and added Schnellenberger's name to the unemployment list. Thomas now appeared down to one last mistake, and it was widely regarded in Baltimore that he made it when he hired Marchibroda instead of landing a proven winner like Joe Paterno or Irsay's own admitted favorite, Ara Parseghian. Marchibroda was regarded as being without ambition because he had never applied for a head coaching job during his 14 years as an NFL assistant. Thomas had been branded a "meddler," a know-it-all who refused to leave his coaches alone, and one critic wrote that Thomas had found just the man he wanted in Marchibroda, because the chief requisites for the job were to be "quiet, loyal and pliable." It

was said to be a foregone conclusion that Thomas would continue to bungle things and Irsay would finally wise up and fire him in favor of someone who was competent.

Things didn't turn out that way. Neither was Thomas the Lion, nor Marchibroda the Lamb, that they were alleged to be. The Odd Couple became a Dynamic Duo, leading Baltimore from a 2-12 record in 1974, the worst in the league, to 10-4 and the AFC Eastern Division title the next year.

How they ignored their obvious differences in personality and quietly blended their divergent views on the way to build a winner in the NFL became as much an amazing success story as the dramatic rise of the Colts.

Thomas can be explosive, impatient, a hard-bitten battler who seems to leap from one controversy to another. Marchibroda, meanwhile, is usually quiet, patient, an easy-going type whose first NFL boss, Bill McPeak, described him as "an altar boy." Yet they worked well together. There was no apparent meddling or manipulating by Thomas, and Marchibroda proved to be a strong head coach, playing his own way, with his own lineup. He was nobody's puppet.

They formed an incongruous partnership, an Odd Couple. But it took the unique personality and talents of each to return Baltimore to NFL prominence.

Thomas in reality is no different from

most tough, successful businessmen, but he operates under the high-powered microscope reporters focus on all sports figures. He refuses to pamper the delicate egos of athletes, he never renegotiates contracts, and if a player doesn't produce as much as Thomas thinks he should, he is quickly shipped out. Thomas won't keep anyone around for sentimental value. When a player's productive days are behind him, so are his days in Baltimore, even if he is John Unitas.

Is that "unfeeling ruthlessness?" His critics say yes. Thomas says it's his job to run a business, and he'll make no special concessions to the fact his employees happen to be athletes.

It was because of that attitude that Thomas encountered trouble soon after he arrived in Baltimore. After the Colts lost four of their first five games in 1972, he fired a popular coach, Don McCafferty, and told the replacement, John Sandusky, he wanted Marty Domres at quarterback instead of the 39-year-old, faltering John Unitas. The Colt skid continued (4-5 the rest of the year), and shortly after the season ended Thomas unloaded the entire coaching staff. Then he cleaned house, within 11 days dispatching Unitas, Matte, Bill Curry, Billy Newsome, Norm Bulaich, Jerry Logan and several others in a startling series of trades. Some of the players blasted Thomas on their way out, and were joined in their criticism by fans and reporters alike.

Now that the Colts have regained their long-held status as a powerhouse, Thomas says, "There's a great deal of inner satisfaction because of all the abuse I had to take. I probably took more abuse than anyone in the history of sports. I just let it ride. I knew what I had to do. There's always the easy path and the tough one, and I took the tough one. I could have sat back and said, 'I just got here, give me a couple of years to analyze the situation.' But I'm not that kind of person. I think we have too many people today who want to take the easy way all the time.

"The players said I broke up a feeling of family and love on the team that enabled it to be successful. They called it love, I called it a clique. Of course they disliked me. I disturbed their nest. If you let bees alone, they won't attack you.

1. Baltimore's long game of musical chairs ended with an announcement by Colts General Manager Joe Thomas that quiet Ted Marchibroda (right) would be the head coach for 1975.

2. Many critics said Thomas, who was once a head coach, merely wanted a puppet and Marchibroda was ideal. All admitted that Thomas knew talent.

3. Detractors cited the fact that Ted Marchibroda had been content as an assistant coach for 14 years and wouldn't threaten Thomas' dominance.

4. Thomas and Marchibroda's common ground was a desire to see the Colts win and Bert Jones develop into a field general of the first rank.



PHOTO BY PAUL T. WHYTE



PHOTO BY MALCOLM EMMONS

But if you bother them, they'll come after you. When I got here in 1972 the bottom had already fallen out on the Colts but the fans didn't know it. The team had gotten too old. It wasn't headed anywhere but down. I had to do something about it, start cleaning it out. Waiting a year might have been the thing to do public relations wise, it would have made things easier on me, but I don't believe in wasting time."

But wouldn't a little use of tact help?

"If players are playing for nothing, you use tact," says Thomas. "But if you're taking a payday from this game you've got to expect more than a pat on the backside."

Born 55 years ago in the tough steel mill area around Warren, Ohio, to parents who had emigrated from Yugoslavia, he grew up knowing what hard work and hunger were in the Depression era. There were no velvet people in his world, and it's no surprise he emerged with rough edges intact. He has always been characterized by honesty, often brutal honesty, but no one ever had to ask Joe Thomas where he stood.

He compiled an impressive track record when he was the first man hired by the expansion Minnesota Vikings in 1960 and again by the Miami Dolphins in 1965, using his role in the personnel department to bring in Vikings like Fran Tarkenton, Carl Eller, Jim Marshall, Bill Brown and Mick Tingelhoff and Dolphins like Larry Csonka, Bob Griese, Paul Warfield, Mercury Morris, Bill Stanfill, Jake Scott, Dick Anderson and others.

But when he arrived in Baltimore, he encountered sports writers and TV critics convinced they knew more about running a football team than he did, and he repeatedly heard, "Don't tell me what you did in Minnesota and Miami, tell me what you're doing in Baltimore." It was written that Thomas might be okay as a judge of player talent, but when he got a job as general manager, he had personified the Peter Principle, rising to the level of his incompetence.

The Thomas battle with the press and the decline in ticket sales continued for three years. Meanwhile, he was weeding out the old and bringing in the new, drafting players like quarterback Bert Jones and defensive linemen Mike Barnes, Fred Cook, John Dutton and Joe Ehrmann, who led the league with 59 quarterback sacks last year. He traded for others, making masterful deals for All-Pro tackle George Kunz, tight end Raymond Chester, guard Elmer Collett, and linebackers Jim Cheyunski and Tom MacLeod. His greatest trade, however, was sending defensive end Billy Newsome to New Orleans for a chance to draft Bert Jones.

When 1975 started, 34 of the 43 Colts were players he had brought in. It was indeed the team that Joe built. But that wasn't enough. A coach was needed. Thomas coached the team in 1974 after Irsay fired Schnellenberger, posting only a 2-9 record but winning popularity with the players, many of whom had regarded him as an ogre when he was off in the distance of the general manager's office.



He enjoyed coaching, but was realistic enough to admit he couldn't do a first-rate job both on the field and in the front office, and launched a search for another coach.

Marchibroda didn't seek the Colt job, but was receptive when Thomas offered it. Why Marchibroda?

Thomas was impressed with the job Marchibroda had done as offensive coordinator with the Redskins and his work through the years with quarterbacks Roman Gabriel, Sonny Jurgensen and Billy Kilmer. Thomas was convinced two-year veteran Bert Jones, his most prized player, had the potential to become the best in football, and only needed someone to teach him how to play quarterback.

The 45-year-old Marchibroda, son of Polish emigrants, had had a brief NFL career as quarterback with the Steelers and Cardinals (he was the league's second-leading passer in 1956) before an arm injury forced an early retirement. He made Jones a personal project. "He has the talent to be excellent," the rookie coach said. "A quarterback needs two qualities to become a winner... one is a great arm, the other is mental toughness that all the great ones like Van Brocklin, Layne, Starr and Unitas had. I think Jones has it, too." He summoned the Bayou Bomber to Baltimore for the month of May, and they worked together three hours every day, studying films, analyzing defenses, and "teaching Bert a philosophy of offense, educating him in how to attack a defense. I want to make him 30-years old by the time the season is over," he said of his 24-year-old field general.

Did it work? It must have, because Jones made the Colts the second-highest scoring team in the league. He was third in the NFL in passing, completing 59% of his attempts (for 2483 yards and 18 touchdowns) and being intercepted a league low of 2.3% of the time. "I'm not throwing any better than I did four or five years ago," said Jones. "The difference is in mental preparation. Ted and I work hard together during the week, and



I'm well prepared by Sunday. I can recognize every defense used against us. I realize what I should be doing against it, how to attack it. And the reason I'm prepared is Ted Marchibroda." The coach, meanwhile, made some changes in his own thinking, too, abandoning some of his natural conservatism for Jones' flair for the big play and the long pass.

In his initial season, Marchibroda took the wealth of extremely young talent Thomas had assembled and with a firm but benevolent hand molded it into an outstanding team.

There were two keys to his success: endless hours of preparation and an ability to elicit the maximum from his players.

"Let's face it," says veteran tight end Raymond Chester, one of the team's leaders. "Times have changed. Ted has this understanding of young players and because of it he gets respect, not because he pounds his fist on a table, but because he just kind of deserves it. He knows that even though we'll be in the public eye we'll never embarrass him. There are no written rules for us. He treats us as adults and not like a head coach who once made an All-Pro player stand in the corner for chewing gum. Whatever kind of psychological spell he was working, I don't know. But if I don't put out for him 100% I feel I cheat the man, and he doesn't have to say a word to me. He helped me put my head on straight about football. The man can re-

1. Ted didn't turn into a tyrant, but he was certainly no lamb. He earned the respect of rookie and veteran alike and posted a 10-4 1975 record—with wins in the last nine season games.

2. Conversely, Joe Thomas avoided meddling and proved the detractors wrong about himself and Marchibroda.

3. Running back Lydell Mitchell said about Marchibroda, "We believe in him and he believes in us." Well, Colt fans believe in all of them!

late to people. He can tell it to you exactly the way it is and when a man is truthful, how can you do anything but respect him?"

Runningback Lydell Mitchell says, "We believe in him and he believes in us. He gives us all a lot of confidence. He gets respect. The guy does a tremendous job in preparing us. He hardly ever jumps on a player and criticizes him, but when he does you know you deserve it. We have a limited number of rules and he makes it easy on us, but the things that are important he insists be done and we do them."

The remarks of Chester and Mitchell are reflective of how most of the Colts regarded Marchibroda.

"I have no secret ingredient to what I do," says the Colt coach. "The most important things I like to consider are common sense and other people's feelings. You have to when you're dealing with 43 human beings who just happen to play football as well. I didn't come in with a magic wand. No coach can win if he doesn't have the players. There's nothing brilliant about coaching, just lots of hours devoted to details and study. I was brought up in the normal Polish tradition, where hard work meant reward, and that's what I believe in."

He worked his players extremely hard, but made them like it. When linebacker Mike Curtis (whom Marchibroda later benched in favor of Jim Cheyunski) was asked why he thought the Colts had breezed to a 35-7 win in their season opener at Chicago, he said, "We were just very well prepared. We have so many (expletive deleted) meetings I can't

stand it. We've got meetings all the time. I hate them, but they're important. When we got on the field, we were ready, we knew what to do, what to expect. We're much better prepared than at any time the past couple of years."

The Colt start was rocky, with four losses in six exhibition games and then four losses in the first five league games of a rough opening schedule. "After we played so badly in the last exhibition game," recalled punter David Lee, "he talked in a calm, sincere manner and never once did he curse at us. I respected him for that. Then he told us, 'I'm not going to let you lose.' I knew then that if any man could make us a winner, it was Ted."

Despite the slow start, Marchibroda refused to panic. He was slow to quit on any player, reluctant to make lineup changes. His patience was incredible. He refused publicly to chastise or privately berate his players, and they responded by putting together a nine-game win streak that earned a berth in the playoffs, after being the worst team in the NFL the year before. When the Colts got their win streak going, some of the players grew confident and boastful, showing signs of cockiness. Marchibroda did nothing to curb them or pull the reins on his young team. "I don't think a little cockiness in a young team is bad," he said.

Baltimore lost in the playoffs at Pittsburgh, a game in which Jones was kayoed with an injury early in the first quarter. Afterwards, in an emotional locker room scene, Marchibroda told his players, "There are no excuses or alibis to

be made. They were a better team and you have nothing to be ashamed about. You gave your all. A man can't do any more than that. There is only one Super Bowl champion and we played them. But this year there is another winner, and that's this team right here. I'm proud to be the coach. You have been a part of NFL history, no other team ever came from as far back as you did. You're a credit to yourselves."

Maybe owner Art Rooney, whose Steelers Marchibroda had once quarterbacked, said it best when he noted early in the season: "Ted's nothing but class. If those players can't play for him, there's something wrong with them because they don't come any finer than that guy."

They're an Odd Couple, Thomas and Marchibroda. One is tough enough to have withstood an incredible amount of criticism, smart enough to be perhaps the best judge of talent in the NFL, and wise enough that once he found a competent coach, to leave him alone and allow him to do things his own way. The other is perceptive enough to be one of the game's best offensive planners, patient enough to give his players time to learn to do things his way, and understanding enough to allow them to be individualists, and thereby reap the rewards of their complete dedication.

After the season, Thomas was honored as Baltimore's Man of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce and the NFL Executive of the Year by The Sporting News. Marchibroda won everybody's Coach of the Year award.

They made a splendid combination. 🐾



PHOTO BY MALCOLM EMMONS

"A complete about-face"

Ted Marchibroda's years with George Allen were reflected in Ted's approach to maturity on his Baltimore team in 1975. Inheriting a cellar (2-12) eleven with one of the all-time low maturity factors in the 10 years of the charts, Marchibroda began his Colt tenure by gazing upon experience with reverence. He followed Joe Thomas' house cleaning by retaining mostly veterans with experience, and the maturity factor of

the Colts shot up from 1.94 in 1974 to a more respectable 2.63 in 1975.

(The maturity factor is the average number of years of previous professional experience on the roster, going into the present season. Thus, if the Colts' starting roster in 1976 should be the identical 47 men who were there at the end of 1975, the Colts would begin '76 with a 3.63 factor. Through 11 years of the charts, the teams with the more

maturity have a huge edge over their less mature opponents in regular season competition.)

In 1974, Pittsburgh became the first team, since the charts began, to come from the "second division" in maturity and win the Super Bowl. Last year, the Steelers jumped from 2.72 to 3.67, a figure more befitting a champion.

In 1975, the AFC, as usual, was less of a maturity conformist than the NFC. In intra-AFC competition, the more mature teams won 61% of the time. In intra-NFC games, the figure was 69% in favor of the old guys. Strangely, the schedule worked out so that in the inter-conference matches, the younger AFC had more mature teams in the frays than did the older NFC. This resulted in 58% victories by the AFC, and in those same games the more mature team won 77% of the inter-conference schedule. In total NFL competition, the more mature team won 67.4% of the games played.

As regular readers of this publication are aware, maturity factor champions don't always win. A mature team can lose with over-the-hill men, inferior talent, injuries, inferior coaching or bad luck. But with the exception of the 1974 Steelers, teams low in maturity just don't go all the way. Yet, there is a remarkable similarity in the relative standings in the accompanying chart.

The Philadelphia Eagles rated low in their division on both charts, but as far as PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL is concerned, they rate at the very top of the "we care" chart.



THE MATURITY FACTOR (1975)

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE (3.44) (182-182-0)

AMERICAN CONFERENCE (3.30) (94-88)

EASTERN DIVISION

Maturity Factor (2.84)			Actual Finish (34-36)
MIAMI	3.93	BALTIMORE	10-4
NEW YORK JETS	3.12	MIAMI	10-4
BALTIMORE	2.63	BUFFALO	8-6
BUFFALO	2.51	NEW YORK JETS	3-11
NEW ENGLAND	2.02	NEW ENGLAND	3-11

CENTRAL DIVISION

Maturity Factor (3.42)			Actual Finish (36-20)
PITTSBURGH	3.67	PITTSBURGH	12-2
HOUSTON	3.63	*CINCINNATI	11-3
CINCINNATI	3.28	HOUSTON	10-4
CLEVELAND	3.12	CLEVELAND	3-11

WESTERN DIVISION

Maturity Factor (3.75)			Actual Finish (24-32)
OAKLAND	4.53	OAKLAND	11-3
KANSAS CITY	4.26	DENVER	6-8
DENVER	3.40	KANSAS CITY	5-9
SAN DIEGO	2.81	SAN DIEGO	2-12

NATIONAL CONFERENCE (3.59) (88-94)

EASTERN DIVISION

Maturity Factor (3.74)			Actual Finish (38-32)
WASHINGTON	5.47	ST. LOUIS	11-3
ST. LOUIS	4.12	*DALLAS	10-4
DALLAS	3.44	WASHINGTON	8-6
NEW YORK GIANTS	2.84	NEW YORK GIANTS	5-9
PHILADELPHIA	2.84	PHILADELPHIA	4-10

CENTRAL DIVISION

Maturity Factor (3.77)			Actual Finish (27-29)
MINNESOTA	5.44	MINNESOTA	12-2
DETROIT	4.28	DETROIT	7-7
GREEN BAY	3.34	GREEN BAY	4-10
CHICAGO	2.02	CHICAGO	4-10

WESTERN DIVISION

Maturity Factor (3.22)			Actual Finish (23-33)
LOS ANGELES	4.14	LOS ANGELES	12-2
ATLANTA	3.35	SAN FRANCISCO	5-9
SAN FRANCISCO	3.30	ATLANTA	4-10
NEW ORLEANS	2.09	NEW ORLEANS	2-12

*4th best finisher

HALL OF FAME PHOTO CONTEST
FIRST PLACE WINNER COLOR ACTION
WARREN SKIPPER, ORLANDO SENTINEL STAR

"A very different face"



THE FLYING EAGLES



AN ENCOUNTER WITH LEUKEMIA

BY MIKE RATHET

"But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

—Isaiah 40:31

Tight end Fred Hill walked slowly off the field after the workout at the Philadelphia Eagles' training camp, where his wife and 3-year-old daughter, Kimberley, had been watching daddy grunt and groan under the noonday sun. Well, at least mommy had watched. Kimberley kept falling asleep.

Hardly unusual for a 3 year old in the sweltering autumnal heat. But Hill had reason to be alarmed.

"She not only kept falling asleep," Hill remembers, "but she was awful pale and her legs were all bruised. I told my wife to take her right back home for a check-up."

Hill didn't hear anything definitive until his wife called while he was in the Eagles' dressing room prior to a game against the Detroit Lions. His wife paraphrased the conversation with their family doctor following Kimberley's examination as well as she could. There were a lot of words. Hill hung on three: "Low blood-count."

He went out to play thinking about that and, admittedly, not much else.

"I asked the team doctor what low-blood count could mean and he said it could be anemia or something like that," Hill remembers. "He also said there was a possibility it could be leukemia. I remember asking him, 'Do you really think it could be leukemia?' and then going out to play thinking about that over and over. My mind wasn't on playing and I wound up really clipped on one play; tore all the ligaments in my knee. My leg was put in a cast—and that's the way I came home."

What Hill heard at home tore at his heart.

"Our family doctor said Kimberley had leukemia... she probably was going to die," Hill recalls. "The odds were less than one percent that she would live more than two years."

That was 1971—and it marked the beginning of Kimberley's fight for life. It also marked the beginning of the Eagles' flight for life. For Hill became the catalyst for what is unquestionably the largest, most ambitious fund-raising operation conducted by any team in sports history—a project called "Eagles Fly for Leukemia."

Its immediate aim is raising \$800,000 to totally equip an oncology floor in Philadelphia's Children's Hospital with the most sophisticated equipment for the

treatment of leukemia that modern technology can provide. Its parallel aim—already achieved in Philadelphia—is providing halfway houses throughout the country for the families of children undergoing treatment. Its ultimate aim is the defeat of the disease.

The Eagles call it their Super Goal.

That's close enough to Super Bowl to have the same ring. But there haven't been any books written about the team behind it. Publishers know the difference. Books are written about Super Bowl teams not Super Goal teams. Books are written about star players who take drugs to get high, not athletes who are searching for drugs to cure disease. Books are written about quarterbacks who stay up all night making whoopee before the big game rather than athletes who expend their energy selling milkshakes to lick leukemia. Books are written about owners who spend the club's money to sign free agents rather than owners who spend their own money to underwrite the costs of fund raising.

It is that way because the subject mat-

ter of pill-popping is more titillating than the subject matter of little Amy. Amy is the poster girl for "Eagles Fly for Leukemia." She was 4 when she posed for the picture, dressed in a blue and white checked pinafore topped by a white sun-bonnet. Amy also was 4 when she died.

It is that way because the subject matter of sex is more titillating than the subject matter of young Johnny. Johnny was the star, along with Eagles' quarterback Roman Gabriel, of the fund-raising film made to support "Fly for Leukemia." The film still is being shown but neither Johnny nor his sister, Maria, is alive to see it.

It is that way because the subject matter of a player's contract figures is more titillating than the text of a letter to the Eagles that says: "I have enclosed a check for \$145 which I send in memory of my son, Joey Bold, who died of leukemia. He was ill for 6½ years. Of this amount, \$130 is from Joey himself, as it was his bank account and savings bond."

But this is not a commentary on our



values—it is about those people who encountered a killer and formed a team to take the field against it. It is about children like Kim and Amy. It is about fathers like Fred Hill and Charles Marino. It is about teammates like Eagles' owner Leonard Tose and McDonald's President Ray Kroc. It is about Shamrock Shakes and Ronald McDonald Houses. It is about the \$600,000 that has been raised so far and the second team to take the field—the Chicago Bears.

It begins, however, on a much smaller front with Fred Hill, daughter Amy, and an idea. The idea was simple—raise money for leukemia. Hill added the first flourish by influencing the Eagles into putting their official team logo on leukemia fund coin boards. Later, Hill organized a fashion show by the Eagles' wives that raised \$9000, more than half of which came from Tose.

"We felt pretty good about it," Hill recalls, "but all Mr. Tose kept saying was how much we goofed. I remember his exact words—'Freddy, anytime you can

get 40 football players together in the same room, and it's to help kids, you ought to be able to do a whole lot better than \$9000. Let's do something bigger next year.'"

While searching for that something bigger, Hill and a friend, Stan Lane, also began searching for something more concrete—literally.

"We knew we had the potential," Hill explains. "We needed something concrete—something the people of Philadelphia could see. The idea of our money going to a national fund didn't really satisfy us. We were concerned where the money would go."

The search took Hill and Lane to Children's Hospital, a designated National Cancer Research Center, and Dr. Audrey Evans, the director of cancer research. Hill and Lane asked her one question: Do you need anything?

There is no known cure for leukemia, more commonly known as cancer of the blood. Some 350,000 people a year die from cancer—about one person every 2 minutes. Of those, more than 3000 are children. Most of them die from leukemia. Treatment and research require sums of money that stagger anyone's mind. A simple microscope with a dual head \$2500. A life-island unit (for children who require very special isolated treatment) costs \$50,000. It accommodates just two children. Some current leukemia chemotherapy requires a drug so expensive it is impossible to buy. It is so costly that no one could possibly afford it, so the government has to make it available at no cost.

And Fred Hill was asking Dr. Evans if she needed anything?

"Dr. Evans drew up a list, like a top 10 list," Hill remembers. "No. 1 was a wing for the hospital, another was a halfway house. Equipping the whole floor would take \$800,000."

Hill brought the list to Jim Murray, now the Eagles' general manager. Murray took it to Tose. Tose met with Hill, who ticked off the list of 10 items, including the \$50,000 life-island units.

"We'll go for it," said Tose.

"The \$50,000?" asked Hill.

"Hell, no," said Tose. "We'll equip the entire floor no matter how long it takes."

With that, the Eagles officially launched "Fly for Leukemia." It included the usual fashion show, a telephone fund raiser in which players manned the phones and a pass-the-hat attempt during the Eagles-New York Giants game that is best remembered by Hill because everyone involved wound up in the Eagles' dressing room counting money on their hands and knees.

There was some reluctance to the pass-the-hat scheme because it was felt the fans in the stands might be offended. But the biggest problem actually turned out to be the containers passed among the fans, with the usual tiny slits for coins. Just as they were being passed out, Roman Gabriel hit Don Zimmerman with a touchdown pass—and the response was totally unexpected.

"I can remember people with their hands in their pockets cheering," says Jim Murray, "and dropping money in the container without taking their eyes off the field."

Apparently it was much easier to crumple up a dollar bill than fish for coins because when Hill and the other money counters took the containers to the dressing room at halftime they found themselves with a monumental problem.

"Instead of coins, most of the people seemed to have folded up bills and slipped them into the small holes," Hill recalls with a smile in his voice. "We already had made a commitment to announce the amount we had collected before the game ended. We hadn't anticipated the outpouring or the fact we would get folded bills. I still laugh when I think of everyone down on the locker room floor counting money and trying to unfold and straighten all those dollar-bills into neat piles."

The piles totaled \$20,055—and "Fly for Leukemia" was airborne. Additional fuel came from the telephone-pledge fund raiser, and an outpouring from every-

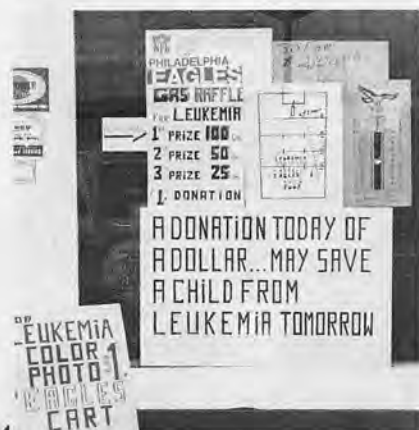
1. The Eagles efforts to date have netted over \$600,000 and helped to provide funds for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, a national child cancer research center as designated by the President of the United States.

2. Former Eagle Fred Hill tests his daughter Kim's cooking. Hill began the Eagles Fly for Leukemia when Kim was found to have the disease.

3. The Eagles kicked off their Fly for Leukemia drive with a local radiothon. Fans could call in and talk with their favorite Eagles player and make their pledge at the same time. It was a \$30,000 success.

4. This is what the window at Joe's Gulf Station in Northeast Philadelphia looked like as he staged his own personal campaign. Owner Joe Scirrotto has raised almost \$14,000 for the fund.

5. CBS sportscaster Tom Brookshier interviews Eagles general manager Jim Murray during the live coverage of the Ronald McDonald House dedication in Philadelphia, October 1974. Standing between Brookshier and Murray is McDonald's hamburger chain founder, Ray Kroc, who came in from Chicago for the opening. Eagle linebacker Bill Bergey and wide receiver Harold Carmichael have a gift for Kroc.



where in the area. Bobby Clarke of the Philadelphia Flyers, the National Hockey League's most valuable player, collected \$400 from his teammates. Joe Scirrotto donated one cent on every gallon of gas he sold at his garage. A midget football league passed the hat at its championship game. A dinner dance organized by Barbara Kuchenmeister brought in \$7000. An insurance company raffle added \$200. A 24-hour basketball marathon run by St. Bernard's CYO raised a welcome \$315.

And then there was the newest addition to the team—McDonald's. That's right—the golden arches people. The McDonald's connection led to the proceeds of all Shamrock Shakes—green milkshakes—being contributed. Roman Gabriel was the focal point for the first Shamrock Shake drive (\$34,000) and Bill Bergey for the second (\$83,000).

Bergey got involved when he was included among several Eagles taking a tour of Children's Hospital. The father of

two children—Jason, 4, and Jake, 1—Bergey is one of the NFL's most terrifying linebackers on the playing field and one of its biggest pushovers in the face of little people.

"When we got to the third floor (the leukemia wing), I noticed out of the side of my face a father leaning over a crib and crying," Bergey recalls. "Here was a couple of thousands pounds of football players walking through, along with assorted big brass, creating considerable noise, and this man never looked up. He just leaned over the crib and cried. I couldn't help stopping and staring at the guy, and all I wanted to do was get out of there, step on the nearest elevator and run home and hug and kiss my children."

But the role played by the Bergeys and the Gabriels extends far beyond fund raising. Fund raising is one thing. Raising spirits is another.

"It's not only a money or brick and mortar identification," says Dr. Evans.

"You take someone like Roman Gabriel. He walked in here shortly before Christmas and asked if we had a Santa Claus. I'm a hardened gal, but I almost cried. On Christmas morning, he wanted to hand out presents to the kids. Something like that is therapy we can't buy no matter how much money we have. It's all so beautiful."

"It's not something we have to do," says Bergey. "It's something we want to do. The purity of the thing is that the boss (Tose) picks up all the administrative costs. That means if 14¢ is collected by kids it goes right into the pot. There's nothing taken out."

No monetary figure ever has been put on Tose's involvement—and the Eagles decline to even issue a guess. But he has dug into his own pocket on more than several occasions to contribute his own money and he hired an administrator to oversee the "Fly for Leukemia" who is paid by and works directly for the Eagles.

"We're probably the only team in professional sports with a guy specifically working on charity," says Murray. "Leonard pays all the administrative costs—so everything goes back in. Every penny collected is used against leukemia. Heck, we haven't won anything for 14 years and the fans of our city have supported us—this is a chance for us to give something back."

One of the things they gave back was the house at 4032 Spruce Street. The property is distinguished from the others on the street only by a fresh coat of paint, a front porch covered with green



outdoor carpeting and a small plaque bearing Ronald McDonald's name. It didn't always look that way, however.

"When we first saw it, it looked like it was part of the DMZ," says Murray. "It was a typical college boarding house, rundown, needing a tremendous amount of work. Now it's got to be the most expensive row house in Philadelphia without a mortgage."

A house was one of the items on Dr. Evans' original list for Fred Hill. Its purpose was to provide families with a place to be together during the often lengthy series of treatments that take place at Children's Hospital. The aim was to soften the monetary expenditure usually required by staying in hotels and to offer children and their parents a family-type relationship even while the disease was treated.

After the actual house was purchased, John Canuso, whose daughter Joanie has leukemia, took over. He gutted the house and renovated it from top to bottom, putting a gentle armlock on his friends for help and digging deep into his own pockets for funds.

The house is now a home but, more important than that, has become the tool by which the Eagles hope to spread their

wings over the entire country. Ever since the "Fly for Leukemia" began to take off in Philadelphia, the Eagles have been looking for a way to enlarge the battlefield against leukemia by extending it to other cities. The concept of a Ronald McDonald House in every NFL city—in every major American city—has now become the operable target. The second city involved is Chicago. The prime movers are the Chicago Bears. The "names" involved are coach Jack Pardee and running back Mike Adamle. There also are milkshakes. Not Shamrock Shakes; this time McDonald's is using Arctic Orange.

It all started with Chicago's Fred Hill—Charles Marino. Like Hill, Marino has a daughter. Her name is Gage. She is 6. And she has leukemia. While undergoing treatment last year, Gage was hit with a difficult-to-conquer form of pneumonia requiring constant hospitalization.

"We—my wife and I—decided to stay overnight at the hospital with her," Marino recalls. "She was on a respirator for five days, unconscious most of the time, but we stayed. We felt our place was with her. And we slept on chairs. I said to myself, 'There must be some place for parents to stay when something like this happens.' But when I asked around, I found there really wasn't. Besides, the need went far beyond the parents—it included children who had to travel long distances."

While talking to one of the doctors at Chicago's Children's Hospital, Marino learned about the project for a Ronald McDonald House in Philadelphia. He flew to Philadelphia, met with everyone involved and decided Chicago needed what Philadelphia already had. In late June, the Bears kicked off their battle.

"I never would have dreamed of going with this thing to the Bears if I hadn't

seen what Philadelphia had been able to accomplish because of the Eagles," says Marino. "What's being done is a big thing—not a token. Not all children are going to survive, but you can see them getting better. The psychology of getting better is a large part of getting better. The House is a rallying point for parents and children to fight this thing and I'm hoping what we're seeing is just the tip of the iceberg. We want to spread this to other cities—to Denver, to Los Angeles, to Boston."

"This is the best kind of expansion," chuckles Murray. "I'd like to see a House in every major city—with a football team or without a football team. In our league, where everybody is lauded for playing with pain and for their courage, real courage is what these children show us every day. I'll tell you this: Our aim in Philadelphia has been to complete the leukemia wing. But our commitment is really open ended. We're staying in until the game's won."

Until there are no more little Amys and little Johnnys. Until there are only cases like Kimberley Hill's. Fred Hill's daughter just recently took another major step in the battle when she was told she can start skipping the check-ups she used to have to undergo every 6 months. When Fred Hill tells you about it there's a lightness in his voice. But he can't help chuckling with pride when he tells you the rest of it.

Kimberly, you see, is into sports. A 4th grader, she is a member of the nationally known Mission Viejo, Calif., Swim Club that has produced a number of national champions. More important, she is one of the good, little hitters on the community's "bobbysox"-level softball team.

The coach of the softball team is Fred Hill.

1. The Ronald McDonald room in Philadelphia's Ronald McDonald House is representative of the cheery, homey atmosphere of the halfway house for parents and children fighting leukemia.

2. Bill Bergey, Eagles' defensive All-Pro and spokesman for "Eagles Fly for Leukemia" prepares to tape a TV commercial promoting McDonald's Shamrock Shakes. The one week promo wherein McDonald's Restaurants donated all receipts from sale of the shakes resulted in a check to Philadelphia Children's Hospital of over \$83,000.

3. Kimberly Hill, shown here getting help from daddy (former Eagles' tight end Fred Hill) while mommy (Fran) watches, has recently been told she can start skipping checkups she used to have to undergo every 6 months.

4. Eagle wide receiver, Harold Carmichael (right), chats with Philly radio personalities Dick Clayton (left) and Merrill Reese during first Eagles Fly for Leukemia Radiothon. WIP is Eagles' flagship station. This effort netted nearly \$30,000 for the fund.



“A story of heart and fellowship”

The Eagles' flight is clearly programmed to puncture through darkened skies, to transcend bad weather and to touch down gently at the Super Goal line. It's a beautiful story of harmony and fellowship among people at the owner-player-coach-staff and hanger-on levels, all comprising the flight crew on a trip which, hopefully, will be on-going until it ends on a runway marked "V" for victory.

PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL would like it to be known that the idea to run the Eagles-leukemia story did not originate in our office, nor in the promotion department of the Eagles, nor with any interested medical agency. It came from Mike Rathet, its author, who regularly presides in the boss' cubbyhole at the *Philadelphia Daily News* sports desk.

Mike has been around. He's known as a crusty old newspaperman, hardened and calloused and straight to the point. He has been known to have to move his family thousands of miles, a gruelling task, just to maintain some stubborn point he has made.

But inside the crust, Mike is a sensitive man. He respects integrity with a passion, and it touches him where he lives when integrity is missing. In a real sense, he's the same kind of a guy as the beautiful people he was writing about in the Eagle story.

We had called Mike for counsel on another idea we had planned for these pages. That story never came off. Mike couldn't wait to sell us on doing, instead, the leukemia piece. It was his way of shouting from the housetops—a modern Paul Revere and a Boswell.

As he wrote the story, it became the outpouring of a labor of love. But you who have read pages 32-35 are aware of that.

Last year, on page 48, we editorialized on the futility of the polarization between players and management. We felt that negotiations which followed months of rhetoric in public, and shouts of "I am right, you are wrong" had no chance to succeed. The best way to negotiate is to attempt to get to know and to understand your adversary. You may lessen your fear of him, and you may learn to respect him. Do this privately and negotiate privately and reason has a chance. The Eagles, because of Kim Hill, are getting to understand each other. Owners, staffers, players are as one, in a cause of love.

Last year was not the greatest on the playing field for Philadelphia. There were injuries and other problems, but in 1975 there's a brand new look under a brand new guy, Dick Vermeil. Of all the head coaches in the NFL, Vermeil most resembles the All-American boy. He has the exterior energy usually associated with rookie players.

But Vermeil, at the tender age of 39, is a man of unusual maturity, within. Through years of assistant coaching—and two years head coaching at UCLA—Dick has found ways to make

the most of his opportunities. A Rose Bowl win over Woody Hayes in his second year as a head coach? Incredible. Just ask Woody!

We look for the Eagle to fly upward in the standings, too, under the boyish coach.

But predictions of this sort belong to our two resident experts, Mal Florence of the NFC and Vin DiTrani of the AFC. They had a tough battle last year, picking, between them, just five of the eight teams to make the playoffs.

However, they had their moments. They both picked the Steelers to repeat as champs. Florence, in fact, picked three of four NFC playoff teams (losing out only when St. Louis and Washington reversed their finishes). And he picked the western and central divisions on the nose, give or take a tie spot.

DiTrani, who in 1974 picked three of four AFC playoff teams, got buffaloeed by Baltimore (didn't we all?) but he did pick the Central Division on the nose and nearly duplicated in the west.

For the next 28 pages, Vin DiTrani and Mal Florence will share their expertise.

“A victory over Woody Hayes”





AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Pittsburgh Steelers

HEAD COACH: CHUCK NOLL

The Pittsburgh locker room was all but empty following the Steelers' win over Dallas in Super Bowl X. Safety Mike Wagner looked around the Orange Bowl dressing room and beamed with satisfaction.

"It was great winning the first time," he said, "but a lot of people said we snuck up on everyone last year. But this time, winning it the second time—it's gotta be an even bigger thrill. No one can say we snuck up or anything like that. We were the champs. Everyone was gunning for us. And we took it all again."

Repeating as champion might well be the toughest of all accomplishments in team sports. And winning for a third time, three straight titles, is a real rarity when it comes to professional football. Only one franchise, the Green Bay Packers, ever experienced that level of success, winning in 1929-31 and 1965-67. No club has been able to capture three straight Super Bowls.

So while everyone will be gunning for Pittsburgh again, they had better expect to get a few salvos in return. The Steelers aren't about to succumb without a struggle, if they succumb at all.

OFFENSE

If there was anything that highlighted the Steelers' second championship season it was the continued development of quarterback Terry Bradshaw. The 28-year-old blond bomber improved in every aspect of his game and clearly established himself as the No. 1 quarterback in town, and as one of the top-signal callers in the league. He completed 58% of his passes for 2055 yards and 18 touchdowns. He scrambled for 310 yards and three scores. And he began ridding himself of the lack-of-intelligence badge he had worn since he entered the league in 1970. The Steelers pulled a mild surprise in the college draft when they selected Mike Kruczek of Boston College on the second round. That could mean one of the backups, Terry Hanratty or Joe Gilliam (doghoused in '75) will be going in a trade.

Franco Harris rolled to 1246 yards rushing to pace the Pittsburgh ground game again. And that ground game is particularly important to the Steelers who rely on the time-consuming, long drives to help keep their vaunted defense rested. Rocky Bleier added 528 yards on the ground and continued his textbook blocking as Harris' running mate. Frenchy Fuqua, Reggie Harrison (the Super Bowl punt blocker), and return ace Jim Collier are in reserve. Top rookie is Jack Delopaine, a 48-TD scorer at Salem (W.Va.).

Joining Bradshaw and Harris as keys to the Steeler attack is Lynn Swann, the Super Bowl star whose clutch catches dazzled the Orange Bowl fans last January. Swann did it all season, maybe not as spectacularly, and wound up with 49



No. 32—FRANCO HARRIS

catches, 11 for TD's. Veterans Frank Lewis, John Stallworth, and Reggie Garrett, plus draftees Ernest Prough and Theo Bell, promise plenty of outside targets for Bradshaw.

Larry Brown and Randy Grossman shared the tight-end work with Grossman coming up with outstanding play in the post season. But the two face a strong challenge from 6-5, 255-lb. Bennie Cunningham of Clemson, the Steelers' No. 1 draft pick and the prototype tight end. He could be the blend of Brown's blocking and Grossman's receiving the Steelers have sought in recent years.

The offensive line, tackles Jon Kolb and Gordon Gravelle, guards Jerry Mullins and Jim Clack, and centers Ray Mansfield and Mike Webster, return as does top reserve Sam Davis at guard. But with tackle David Reavis gone to Tampa Bay, some new reserve strength must be found from two top draftees, Ray Pinney (No. 2) and James Files (No. 2a). Both were centers in college but Files will be tried at guard. That would allow Mullins to serve as the backup tackle as well as holding down his starting spot.

DEFENSE

Ironically the Steel Curtain Front Four, which epitomizes the entire Steeler team, could be the most troublesome area for Noll in 1976. Mean Joe Greene is coming off his injury-filled '75 campaign and may not be at his fearsome best for the new season. And Ernie Holmes continued to have off-the-field problems which threaten his status. Luckily, Noll has Steve Furness, one of those "He'd-start-for-any-other-team" types, to back up his question-mark tackles; and drafted Ron Coder of Penn State and Gary Dunn of Miami just in case. Dwight "Mad Dog" White and L.C. "Hollywood Bags" Greenwood are per-

haps the two finest defensive ends ever to perform for the same team at the same time. Both are devastating. And in reserve are John Banaszak, an adequate backup last year; Bob Barber, a No. 2 pick a year ago who played well in the WFL (while it lasted); and Ed McAleney, a No. 8 selection from Massachusetts.

Only Andy Russell's thoughts of retirement can threaten the status of the Steeler linebackers as the best in the NFL. The trio of Russell, Jack Lambert, and Jack Ham went to the Pro Bowl intact and gained All AFC honors as a unit, too. Russell, 35, had an exceptional 1975 season at the weakside spot which was somewhat overlooked. Lambert's establishing himself as a reckless, hard hitting but disciplined middle man and Ham's continuance as the top outside linebacker in the game caused Russell's achievements to go somewhat unnoticed. Behind the three are Marv Kelum and Loren Toews, both with a pair of Super Bowl rings, and an intriguing rookie, Rodney Norton of Rice.

With all that talent in front of him it would seem Mel Blount would have a hard time getting any publicity of his own. But the Steeler cornerback solved that problem by intercepting a league-high 11 passes to gain some defensive MVP honors. Blount, J.T. Thomas, Wagner, and Glen Edwards form a secondary just a half notch below the linebackers in unit performance. Jim Allen (corner) and Donnie Shell (safety) are the top reserve with Brent Sexton, a '75 draftee, and Wonderful (call me Wonder) Monds Jr. of Nebraska in the running for Dave Brown's (gone to Seattle) backup spot.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Latest challenger to Bobby Walden's punting post is Vanderbilt's Barry Burton, an all-around athlete who can play tight end and running back, too. Roy Gerela is firmly entrenched as the placekicker after missing only four field goals all last season. Theo Bell, Randy Butts of Kearney State, and Kelvin Kirk of Dayton are rookies bidding for return jobs.

1975 Season Results

PITTSBURGH (12-2)

37	San Diego	0
21	*Buffalo	30
42	Cleveland	6
20	*Denver	9
34	*Chicago	3
16	Green Bay	13
30	Cincinnati	24
24	*Houston	17
28	*Kansas City	3
32	Houston	9
20	N.Y. Jets	7
31	Cleveland	17
35	*Cincinnati	14
3	Los Angeles	10

*DENOTES HOME GAME

PHOTO BY PETER READ MILLER



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Cincinnati Bengals

HEAD COACH: BILL JOHNSON

It's only appropriate the Cincinnati Bengals should have a "Tiger" as their coach, so let it never be said Paul Brown isn't poetic in nature. When Mr. Pro Football decided he'd had enough of the sidelines, and looked for someone to take over the field direction of the Bengals, he turned to Bill "Tiger" Johnson, and not because of his nickname.

Johnson gained that handle while an All-Pro center for San Francisco in the late 1940s and early '50s. He carried that dedication over to his coaching career, which began in Frisco and eventually switched to Cincinnati when Brown formed the Bengals in 1967.

Undoubtedly Paul Brown saw a lot of Paul Brown in Bill Johnson. The new coach is a stickler for details, like his predecessor. He's devoted to the game, like his predecessor. And he has a passion for victory, like his predecessor.

The Bengals won 11, lost only three last year but are stuck in the same division with the two-time champion Steelers. So Cincinnati had to be content with wild-card honors in 1975 and fell short in its comeback bid against Oakland in the playoffs.

But Brown and Johnson think they've strengthened weak areas through the draft and a trade, setting the stage for the Tiger's debut.

OFFENSE

The Bengals lost Bill Walsh, the man credited with developing their passing game, to the Chargers after Walsh was passed over in favor of Johnson. Chuck Weber, a defensive assistant, also quit. But Johnson found some experienced and knowledgeable men—Mike McCormack, former Eagle head coach; Charley Winner, former Jet and Cardinal head man; and Boyd Dowler, assistant to McCormack at Philly—to fill the vacancies.

There is no offensive coordinator, per say, in the realignment, but those concerned with the offense don't have to worry about the quarterbacking as long as Anderson is around. The 6-2, 211-pound ace plucked from tiny Augustana College six years ago was tops in the NFL in 1975 with 60.5% completion accuracy, 3169 yards, 21 TDs, and just 11 interceptions. John Reaves proved a capable replacement when Anderson was wounded. And two rookies, Bob Bateman of Brown and Lynn Hieber of Indiana (Pa.) were drafted as further insurance.

The running attack, however, bogged down without an outside threat. Boobie Clark (594 yards), Stan Fritts (375), and Lervil Elliott (308) were okay inside, but with Essex Johnson unable to regain his niftiness after knee surgery, opposing defenses could gear themselves to the inside rush. Enter Archie Griffin, Mr. Heisman Trophy from Ohio State, with the quick-



NO. 25—ISAAC CURTIS

ness needed to get outside. Archie's 5177 yards at Ohio State were gained both through the middle and around the end, making him a valuable commodity. Also joining the running attack is Tough Tony Davis, one of those good-in-all-aspects runners from Nebraska who should please the Tiger with his tenacity.

Even with the dispatching of Charlie Joiner to the Chargers for Coy Bacon, that needed pass-rusher, the Bengals are well-stripped in receivers. Billy Brooks, who resembles Isaac Curtis in build and stride, was drafted No. 1 out of Oklahoma, which rarely threw the ball. Even so, the pro scouts saw future stardom stamped all over the 6-4, 215-pound Brooks. Teaming him with Curtis, one of the top home run threats in the game, would give the Bengals perhaps the fastest outside receivers in the game. Dependable Chip Myers, who always gets enough playing time to catch 30 or so passes (36 last year), John McDaniel, and Pat McNally, who missed all last year with a College All-Star Game injury, provide depth. Bob Trumpy, Bruce Coslet, and Jack Novak are more than enough tight ends.

There will be one hole in the offensive line since Howard Fesst was lost to Tampa Bay in the expansion draft. But rookie Glenn Bujnoch of Texas A&M, a super-quick lineman, and fellow neophyte Greg Fairchild of Tulsa will be vying for Fesst's messenger spot. Veterans returning are center Bob Johnson, a tiger in his own right; guards John Shinnors and Dave Lapham; and tackles Rufus Mayes, Vern Holland, and Al Krevis. Ron Hunt from Oregon and Gary Burley, switched from defense to offense, also are in the picture.

DEFENSE

Bacon, a 270-pounder who had his greatest years with the Rams, could plug

that tackle gap left by Reid's premature retirement last year. Bacon's a much better pass rusher than Bob Brown, who gallantly filled the spot a year ago, and more experienced than Bill Kollar, the top sub. Ron Carpenter, the other tackle, is a vastly underrated performer. The ends, Sherman White and Ken Johnson, are adequate although Bacon could play an outside spot, if needed. Richard Bishop, back from the CFL, is in reserve.

Cincinnati drafted Glenn Cameron first last year with the intent of making him the middle linebacker. But veteran Jim LeClair never gave the rookie a chance. LeClair, a bear-wrestler, was superb in 1975 so rookie Cameron played on the specials. Outside backers Ron Pritchard and Al Beauchamp are experienced but will be pressed by second-year men Chris Devlin of Penn State and Bo Harris of LSU, plus rookies Reggie Williams of Dartmouth and Ken Kuhn, one of four Bengal draftees from Ohio State.

Even with a modest 27 sacks from the line, the Bengal air defense was second best in the entire NFL thanks to deep defenders Ken Riley and Lemar Parrish, with Marvin Cobb in reserve at the corners and Tommy Casanova and Bernard Jackson at the safeties. With two reserves lost in the expansion draft, the Bengals will audition Danny Reece, a hard hitter from USC; Scott Perry of little Williams College; Pete Rome of defensively tough Miami of Ohio; and Mel Morgan of Mississippi Valley.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Chris Bahr, Rookie of the Year in the North American Soccer League last summer, and top placekicker in the nation for Penn State last fall, will battle ex-Bear Mirro Roder for the placekicking chores. Green may be pushed by rookie Greg Coleman for the punting job. Willie Shelby, Alabama's star runner who will be tried at wide receiver and defensive back by the Bengals, will help with the returns, as will Reece. Parrish, Casanova, Jackson, and Elliott are the experienced runback men. 🐅

1975 Season Results

CINCINNATI (11-3)

24	*Cleveland	17
21	New Orleans	0
21	Houston	19
27	*New England	10
14	*Oakland	10
21	Atlanta	14
24	*Pittsburgh	30
17	Denver	16
33	*Buffalo	24
23	Cleveland	35
23	*Houston	19
31	Philadelphia	0
14	*Pittsburgh	35
47	*San Diego	17

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Houston Oilers

HEAD COACH: O.A. "BUM" PHILLIPS

The National Football League coaches posed for a "team picture" during their meetings in New York during the '74-'75 off-season. Someone asked which one of the coaches was Houston's Bum Phillips.

It wasn't hard to pick out the man who would be entering his first season as the Oilers' head coach. His close-cropped haircut, cowboy leisure suit, and rope tie were a dead giveaway to O.A. Phillips, who was to lead Houston to a 10-4 mark, with all losses coming to Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, both playoff clubs from the same AFC Central Division.

Phillips, who had been the Oilers' defensive coordinator, took over after Sid Gillman and owner Bud Adams couldn't see eye-to-eye on a number of subjects. His down-home, earthy appearance correctly displayed his personality, and soon "Bumisms"—colorful ways of explaining what happened during the game—had spread across the sports pages of America's newspapers.

Only Ted Marchibroda's miracle in Baltimore kept Phillips from Coach of the Year honors. The Oiler mentor mixed his rugged defense—based on a three-man front—with a good enough offense, and an explosive kick returner in white shoes. These would give Houston its best team since the George Blanda days.

OFFENSE

Phillips entrusted his offense to Dan Pastorini, and the 6-3, 205-pounder from Santa Clara didn't let the coach down. Always an untapped quality, Pastorini began performing with a level of consistency needed to succeed in the NFL. His passing percentage was an undistinguished 47.7, but he gained 2053 yards and rang up 14 touchdowns with his tosses. He also rushed for 97 yards, called an excellent game, and saved a roster spot by handling the punting chores, too. In reserve this year will be veteran John Hadl, acquired from Green Bay for Lynn Dickey. Hadl, however, says he wants to be No. 1, which should make things interesting in training camp.

The Oilers used three running backs to maximum efficiency last year with unheralded Ronnie Coleman leading the way with 790 yards and that brilliant last-minute winning TD run against Miami. Don Hardeman, the big rookie, chipped in with 648 yards and veteran Fred Willis added 420. Willie Rodgers, Robert Holmes, and Jim Ford, back from the WFL, will vie with rookie Skip Walker of Texas A&M for reserve spots.

Most of Pastorini's passes were aimed at wide receivers Ken Burrough, the game-breaker who grabbed 53 for a 20.1 average and eight TDs, and White Shoes Johnson, who caught 37. Emmett Edwards, Bil-



NO. 7—DAN PASTORINI

ly Parks, Nat Hawkins, Jim Beirne, and Mel Baker are veteran subs, with Edwards possessing great potential. Steve Largent from Tulsa was drafted on the fourth round as further insurance. Top draft pick Mike Barber (second round) is a super athlete and may take the tight end job from a horde of competitors, including regular Mack Alston, Willie Frazier, John Sawyer, and former Falcon Larry Mialik.

The Oilers' best source for offensive linemen has been converted defensive linemen. Greg Sampson, once a first-round pick as a defender, has become a solid force at offensive left tackle. And last year Ed Fisher, a noseguard as a rookie, was switched to offensive right guard and performed admirably. The addition of underrated center Carl Mauck from San Diego, plus holdovers Ron Saul and Elbert Drungo, gave Houston a formidable front. Tackle Kevin Hunt, guard Conway Hayman, and Ronnie Carroll, another converted defensive lineman, are the top reserves. Four draft picks were spent on offensive tackles, the top two being Todd Simonsen of South Dakota State and Bobby Simon of Grambling.

DEFENSE

The three-man line is designed for a noseguard like Curley Culp, who has grown from a better-than-average tackle in the conventional setup in Kansas City to a superstar middleguard with the Oilers. Culp accumulated 11½ sacks from his middle post and closed off the holes around center, allowing the linebackers to stifle any inside running game. Elvin Bethea had 10 sacks from his right end post while Tody Smith added seven from the other side. The ends are backed by Bubba

Smith, Tody's brother (remember when it used to be the other way around?) and Jim White while ex-Jet John Little can give Culp a rest in the middle. Top rookie prospect is Larry Harris, a tackle from Oklahoma State who'll probably be tried as end.

Robert Brazile proved to be everything the Oilers hoped for when they drafted him No. 1 out of Jackson State a year ago. Hard-hitting Brazile settled at the outside right linebacker post and gained Defensive Rookie of the Year honors from every source imaginable. He and Gregg Bingham caused havoc on the right side while Steve Kiner (inside) and Ted Washington (outside) did the same on the left. And the unit still is young and improving. Guy Roberts and Duane Benson (injured last year), both starters at one time, plus Ted Thompson and rookie Art Stringer are the reserves.

The secondary saw a switch of safeties, with tough, hard-hitting Willie Germany moving in at the strong side and C.L. Whittington replacing top-interceptor Bob Atkins at free safety. Underrated Willie Alexander and vet Zeke Moore continue on the corners although one might be displaced if Ken Ellis decides to sign with the Oilers. Ellis was obtained from Green Bay in the Hadl trade, but had played out his option. Reserve Mark Cotney was lost to Tampa Bay so two retreads, Preston Anderson (Browns) and Ken Pope (Patriots), will get trials.

SPECIAL TEAMS

It's unusual for people to acclaim a kick returner as a team's most valuable performer, but most experts point to White Shoes Johnson as the key to the Oiler scheme. In addition to his receiving, Johnson led the AFC in punt returns with a 15.3 average and scored three times. He averaged 24.2 and did his wobbly-legged dance once after scoring on a kickoff return. He is among the most exciting players in the league. Skip Butler and Pastorini are the team kickers.

1975 Season Results

HOUSTON (10-4)

7	New England	0
33	*San Diego	17
19	*Cincinnati	21
40	Cleveland	10
13	*Washington	10
24	*Detroit	8
17	Kansas City	13
17	Pittsburgh	24
20	*Miami	19
9	*Pittsburgh	32
19	Cincinnati	23
27	San Francisco	13
27	Oakland	26
21	*Cleveland	10

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Cleveland Browns

HEAD COACH: FORREST GREGG

It was a year ago that Browns' owner Art Modell selected Forrest Gregg, a member of those traditionally rich Green Bay Packer teams, to coach his own club, which has its share of tradition, too. For a while it appeared the two traditions weren't going to mix.

Cleveland struggled through the first nine weeks of '75 without a win, never scoring more than 17 points and coming close just once. But in the final five weeks Gregg and his Browns won three times, including a first-triumph upset of cross-state rival Cincinnati, to finish 3-11.

The turn-around, however, was enough to have Gregg looking forward to his second year in command. And that optimism mushroomed with the Browns' maneuvers in the off-season: trading for Ron Bolton and Gerald Irons, signing Paul Warfield, and drafting some top-notch individuals.

"I feel so much better about the team than I did at the end of last season," said the old Packer offensive tackle. "There were a number of things we had to do to strengthen this club and I'm very, very pleased the way everything has shaped up."

Most coaches tend toward optimism during the off-season but it would be hard to blame Gregg for thinking this could be his lucky year. Early in January doctors found a malignant growth on his leg. They operated, and found the cancer had not spread. It was a big victory for Gregg, and certainly had to lift his spirits for the upcoming campaign.

OFFENSE

For Cleveland to improve its offensive status quarterback Mike Phipps must establish himself in this, his seventh pro season. Phipps threw only four TD passes and had 19 interceptions a year ago. He spent much of the off-season in Florida with quarterback coach Blanton Collier, going over the Browns' offensive plans. It's obvious Gregg is going to stick with Phipps although there are several alternatives: Brian Sipe, who started a few games last year; Will Cureton, a product of the '74 strike who opened one game; rookie Gene Swick, the NCAA all-time total-offense champion from Toledo; and rookie Craig Nagel, a part-time starter at Phipps' alma mater, Purdue.

Greg Pruitt bolted for 1067 yards on the ground last year but was a one-man show. So Gregg has brought in another Pruitt, Mike (no relation to Greg) as a running mate. Mike Pruitt, at 6-1, 215, is scheduled to become the inside threat to shake the defenses off Greg Pruitt's back. His performance at Purdue (again) wasn't spectacular but his potential is limitless. He should move past Hugh McKinnis (259 yards), Billy Pritchett (199), and Henry Hynoski (38) at fullback. Larry Poole, a rookie



NO. 15—MIKE PHIPPS

ie surprise before being injured last year, and draft pick James Reed back up Pruitt.

Warfield, who ironically was traded to Miami for the draft choice used to secure Phipps in 1970, should add some long-range capability to the passing game. At 33, the onetime Browns' star hasn't lost too much of his speed. Reggie Rucker, who tied for the AFC lead in receptions with 60, should be a perfect complement. Behind the two will be Steve Holden, still a big hopeful, and David Logan, drafted No. 3 out of Colorado where he was a three-sport star. Oscar Roan, last year's rookie sensation with 41 catches, is back at tight end supported by vets Morin and Parris.

Several changes in the offensive line marked Gregg's first campaign and another is scheduled because of the trading of Bob McKay to New England. Gregg will open with tackles Doug Dieken, an old standby, and Barry Darrow; guards Bob Jackson, a free-agent find a year ago, and Chuck Hutchison; and center Tom DeLeon. Other candidates include two former Canadian League players, Billy Corbett and Curtis Wester, plus vets Gerry Sullivan and the oft-injured Pete Adams. Several rookie tackles, Henry Sheppard of SMU, Doug Kleber of Illinois, and Brian Murray of Arizona, are given shots at sticking.

DEFENSE

Jerry Sherk, voted the best defensive lineman in the league by his peers, and Walter Johnson continue to give Cleveland excellent tackle play. Mack Mitchell, last year's top draft pick, was impressive at right end. The troublesome left end spot

could go to either of two journeymen, Joe "Turkey" Jones or Ron East, or rookie Richard St. Clair of Grambling. Steve Cassidy of LSU is a tackle prospect of note.

"Getting Irons was beyond my wildest dreams," was Gregg's reaction to securing the former Oakland Raider as his weakside linebacker. Irons will team with Dick Ambrose, a real surprise starter in the middle as a rookie, and Charlie Hall in the starting unit. Behind them are Bob Babich, displaced by Ambrose; John Garlington, coming off knee surgery; and Dave Graf, a second-year man.

Cleveland was a lowly 23rd in NFL pass defense a year ago and Gregg hopes to remedy that ailment with Bolton, obtained from the Patriots for McKay, and Thom Darden, who missed last season with an injury. Bolton joins the cornerback corps which already includes established Clarence Scott and Tony Peters, starter as a rookie last year. If Peters continues to improve, Bolton will play the other side with Scott moving to strong safety. The incumbent there is Neal Craig, although vets Van Green, always good on the special teams, and John Pitts are in the picture, too. Darden, outstanding in his first two seasons, should displace Jimmy Hill at the free safety after recovering from knee surgery. Further support comes from Joe Beauchamp, a veteran cornerback picked up from San Diego; rookie Luther Phillyaw of Loyola (Cal.); and Bill Cravens, who played with Philadelphia in the WFL.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Don Cockroft continues to excel as a two-way kicker as he connected on 17 of 23 field goals, including 16 in a row, to climb into third place in the all-time Cleveland scoring derby (behind Lou Groza and Jim Brown). Cockroft also averaged 40.5 as a punter. Greg Pruitt, always dangerous as a returner, wide receiver Billy Lefear, and rookies Reed and Tom Fleming, a 17th-round pick from Dartmouth, will handle the runback duties.

1975 Season Results

CLEVELAND (3-11)		
17	Cincinnati	24
10	*Minnesota	42
6	*Pittsburgh	42
10	*Houston	40
15	Denver	16
7	*Washington	23
7	Baltimore	21
10	Detroit	21
17	Oakland	38
35	*Cincinnati	23
17	*New Orleans	16
17	Pittsburgh	31
40	*Kansas City	14
10	Houston	21

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Oakland Raiders

HEAD COACH: JOHN MADDEN

During Super Bowl week someone in the National Football League fraternity noticed Oakland's Al Davis hadn't made the Miami scene. So he put in a call to the Raiders' managing general partner.

"I'm not coming down there because we're not playing in the game," Davis explained. "I honestly think we belong there but since we're not, I won't come, either."

Davis has had similar feelings for the past seven seasons. The Oakland Raiders, stellar throughout the regular season, have a bad habit of fizzing out come playoff time. Last season the details read like this: an 11-3 regular-season mark and an easy AFC Western title; a victory over Cincinnati in the first playoff game; and then the loss to the Steelers in the AFC title contest.

It was a particularly bitter loss, too, since Pittsburgh's winning margin was just 16-10. After taking a surprise field goal in the last seconds, the Raiders came up with an onside kickoff. Ken Stabler threw as far as he could and Cliff Branch caught the ball some 20 yards from the Steeler goal line. But time ran out and Davis was left 20 yards, or some 3000 miles, short of his Miami goal.

Oakland, as usual, will be loaded in 1976 and odds-on favorites to win the West again. But will the Pride and Poise Boys make it to Super Bowl XI down the coast in Pasadena?

The ingredients are there, minus perhaps a truly star-level running back and linebacking depth. John Madden has proven himself a good field general and Davis can pull strings with the best of them. But that post-season jinx, whether psychological or physical, must be overcome to keep Davis away from the TV set come the ninth of January.

OFFENSE

Stabler, who'll be 30 years old Christmas Day, dropped off some from his 1974 statistics but still rates among the better passers and signal callers in the league. The southpaw slinger from Alabama, bothered some by a knee injury, completed 58% of his passes for 2296 yards and 16 TDs but had an alarming 24 interceptions. It was the Steeler pass thievery which ruined Oakland in the title game, too. The backup picture is cluttered but untested with second-year man David Humm, a lefty like Stabler; scrambling Larry Lawrence; and rookie Jeb Blount of Tulsa, a second-round draft pick. Of course George Blanda, who'll be 49 in September, still likes to dabble behind center.

While not boasting a super back, Oakland nevertheless ranked third in rushing in the entire NFL thanks to the contributions of powerful Marv Hubbard (294 yards) and Mark van Eeghen (597), slippery Clarence Davis (486), and steady Pete Banaszak (672) and Jess Phillips (298). Harold Hart



NO. 44—MARV HUBBARD

and Louis Carter were lost to Tampa Bay in the expansion draft. Three fullback types, Terry Kunz of Colorado, Calvin Young of Fresno State (a college tight end), and Nate Beasley of Delaware, plus one halfback, Rich Jennings of Maryland, were added during the draft.

Rumors persisted Fred Biletnikoff would be traded but at last report the splendid receiver was returning for his 12th year in Oakland. He, Branch, Mike Siani, and Morris Bradshaw (four TDs in seven catches last year) provide plenty of outside targets. Even with Bob Moore gone to Tampa Bay, the tight end picture is solid with huge Dave Casper, former All-Pro Ted Kwalick, and special teamer Warren Bankston.

For the first time since their birth in 1960 the Raiders had someone other than Jim Otto snapping the ball for them last fall. But Dave Dalby, the replacement, did a fine job to keep the Oakland heritage of fine offensive line play intact. Dalby is flanked by All-Star Gene Upshaw and the underrated George Buehler at the guards. All-Star Art Shell and underrated John Vella are the tackles. Behind the starters are Steve Sylvester (center-guard), Dan Medlin (guard), and Henry Lawrence (tackle). Tackle Mark Young of Washington State, a sleeper pick in the 13th round, is the top newcomer.

DEFENSE

There are six veteran performers from which to choose a starting front four, with Tony Cline, Art Thoms, Otis Sistrunk, and Horace Jones representing the incumbent quartet. But Sistrunk could move to end with veteran Dave Rowe, obtained from San Diego early last season, taking over a

tackle post. This was how the Raiders finished up last year. Kelvin Korver, back from a season lost to injury, also is in the picture. Davis' first draft pick was Charles Phillyaw, a huge (6-8, 270) tackle whose abilities were questioned by some scouting experts. But remember it was Oakland's first draft without Ron Wolf, the former talent man who moved on to Tampa Bay.

Gerald Irons, starting strongside linebacker, was dealt to Cleveland, opening a spot for Ted Hendricks, the Mad Stork who last year filled in at various spots after signing on as a free agent. Hendricks joins fellow All-Star Phil Villapiano and up-and-coming star Monte Johnson behind the front four. Depth is questionable with Willie Hall, Frank Tate (obtained from San Diego), and two rookies, Rik Bonness and Herb McMath. Bonness, an All-America center at Nebraska, was drafted as a line-backer on the Raiders' second pick.

Along with Biletnikoff rumors came stories free safety Jack Tatum was about to be traded, but again, at least at publication time, those rumors hadn't materialized. Tatum, George Atkinson, and Skip Thomas are assured of secondary spots with Neal Colzie, a top kick returner as a rookie, pushing veteran Willie Brown at right corner. Should Tatum be dealt, Charles Phillips, with an amazing six interceptions in spot play as a rookie, would move right into that position. Six defensive backs were picked in the draft, the best being Jerome Dove of Colorado State and Dwight Lewis of Purdue.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Blanda, who'll be entering his 27th pro season, faces his yearly challenge from, this time, Fred Steinfort, a fifth-round draft pick out of Boston College, and ex-Jet-and-Bronco Bobby Howfield. No one can threaten Ray Guy (43.8 average), the league's best punter. Colzie (13.6) is the top punt return man but a replacement for Hart must be found on kickoffs. Clarence Davis and Jess Phillips are experienced in that area.

1975 Season Results

OAKLAND (11-3)

31	Miami	21
31	Baltimore	20
6	San Diego	0
10	*Kansas City	42
10	Cincinnati	14
25	*San Diego	0
42	Denver	17
48	*New Orleans	10
38	*Cleveland	17
26	Washington	23
37	*Atlanta	34
17	*Denver	10
26	*Houston	27
28	Kansas City	20

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Kansas City Chiefs

HEAD COACH: PAUL WIGGIN

For a stretch last season the Kansas City Chief fans must have thought it was the good old days all over again. Their faithful came up with a rout of the powerful Oakland Raiders, and followed that with wins over division rivals San Diego and Denver. After a tough loss to Houston, the Chiefs surprised everyone with a Monday night win over the Super-Bowl-to-be Dallas Cowboys.

It looked like the Chiefs, participants in the first Super Bowl and winners of the fourth, had regained their status among the pro football elite. But it only looked that way.

The spurt in the middle of the year was the highlight of Paul Wiggin's first year as Chief coach, which coincided with the first year of Hank Stram's absence from the Kansas City sidelines. Wiggin finished 5-9 as a rookie with four of those victories coming in that glorious stretch.

The former defensive end is more optimistic as he approaches his second campaign, but realizes there are several question marks, and big ones, which cloud the picture. Buck Buchanan and Len Dawson have retired; Jim Kearney was lost in the expansion draft; Mike Sensibaugh and Marv Upshaw were traded away. Those holes must be filled and stability must be brought to the offensive line which last year suffered an incredible string of injuries. At one time the Chiefs had more guards injured than Pinkerton had healthy.

Wiggin remains optimistic because the people he has brought in are younger and hold more potential than those departing. The draft was good, and when added to those youngsters returning from the injury list of a year ago, the new men supply the basis for Wiggin's optimism.

Whether the good old days return to KC this year is questionable, but Wiggin has the Chiefs headed in the right direction.

OFFENSE

Dawson's retirement after 19 pro years leaves the quarterbacking to Mike Livingston, who Wiggin said "did everything we asked of him last year." Livingston, heir apparent to Dawson's kingdom for eight years, shared the duties with Dawson and Tony Adams last year and wound up seventh in the AFC passing ratings (Dawson was second). His competition this year comes from Adams, a WFL All-Star who was 36-of-77 last year and who is an outstanding runner, and Mike Nott, injured in training camp last summer after showing everyone he could throw the ball a mile.

Woody Green (611 yards), MacArthur Lane (311), Ed Podolak (351), and Jeff Kinney (304) did the bulk of the ball carrying a year ago. Green—still with superstar potential—and Lane rate the starting nods again this time. But help could come from J.J. Jennings, who foresook the Chiefs for



NO. 51—JIM LYNCH

the World Football League three years back and was the top rusher in the WFL's only full season of existence. He's the full-back type. Doug Dressler and Rod Wellington out of Iowa are other running back hopefuls.

Otis Taylor, one of the throwbacks to the good old days, is ready to challenge again for his old wide receiving spot after undergoing knee cartilage surgery. He'll have to combat Barry Pearson and Larry Brunson, both adequate pass catchers. Henry Marshall, a third-round pick out of Missouri, and Ike McBee, a free agent, have good shots at unseating the incumbents. Walter White, who Wiggin thinks can be a superstar someday, and veteran Billy Masters probably will alternate again at tight end. They provided the messenger service to the quarterbacks last year.

Wiggin was searching everywhere for guards after the epidemic of injuries struck Ed Budde, Roger Bernhardt, Randy Beisler, and Tom Condon. Budde will be 36 this year and his status has to be questioned coming off knee surgery, so Wiggin drafted Rod Walters, a 270-pounder from Iowa, on the first round. He may team with Condon at the guards although Charlie Getty, a tackle starter for two seasons, might be moved inside. That switch is dependent upon the development of Matt Herkenhoff, a former WFLer who the Chiefs think could be a fine tackle. Herkenhoff—you guessed it—was injured last year. Jim Nicholson at tackle and Jack Rudnay, a stellar center, are certain of jobs in the chiefs' line.

DEFENSE

Wilbur Young, who accounted for 12 sacks before being injured, and John Matuszak, who continues to unfulfill his enormous potential, are set at the defensive ends. But the tackles are wide open with Cliff Frazier, a second-round pick from UCLA, expected to fill one and vet Bob Maddox (coming off serious knee surgery) and rookie Keith Simons of Minnesota vy-

ing at the other spot. Willie "Foots" Lee of Bethune-Cookman, a 26-year-old Vietnam veteran, could be the rookie surprise. Ex-Steeler Jim Wolf and Dave Wasick, who missed his rookie year with a knee injury, are other competitors.

Willie Lanier is set in the middle and Jim Lynch holds down the right side but just who will be the left linebacker is another puzzler for Wiggin. Clyde Werner, classified as physically unable to perform after undergoing two achilles tendon operations last year, gets the first shot. Rookie Bob Gregolunas of Northern Illinois and Al Palewicz, injured all last year, are other possibilities as is veteran Ken Avery. Jimbo Elrod, Oklahoma's All-America defensive end, will be groomed as a successor to Lanier in the middle while Tim Kearney provides veteran depth behind Lynch.

There is uncertainty in the secondary, too, where the return of Jim Marsalis after knee surgery could determine the settling of both left cornerback and free safety. If Marsalis is okay, he'll be at the corner and Kerry Reardon will play free safety. If Marsalis doesn't make it back, Reardon returns to the corner and free safety is up for grabs among third-year man Don Martin of Yale and rookies Gary Barbaro, a third-round pick from Nicholls State, and Tim Collier, a ninth-round pick from East Texas State. Tim Gray, obtained from the Cardinals in exchange for Sensibaugh and Upshaw, will move in at strong safety where Wiggin thinks he'll become a star. Pass stealer Emmitt Thomas returns at the right corner. Draft choice Steve Taylor of Kansas and free agent Walter Wilson are cornerback hopefuls.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Few teams are better off kickwise than the Chiefs who boast Jan Stenerud and Jerrel Wilson, although Wilson had to give up his punting chores for awhile last year when the injury bug bit him. Collier's kick return prowess makes him a good bet to make the squad, as the incumbent run-back men are adequate at best.

1975 Season Results

KANSAS CITY (5-9)

33	Denver	37
24	*N.Y. Jets	30
3	*San Francisco	20
42	Oakland	10
12	San Diego	10
26	*Denver	13
13	*Houston	17
34	Dallas	31
3	Pittsburgh	28
24	*Detroit	21
14	Baltimore	28
20	*San Diego	28
14	Cleveland	40
20	*Oakland	28

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Denver Broncos

HEAD COACH: JOHN RALSTON

John Ralston isn't asking for much. "Just a normal injury year," pleaded the Denver coach and general manager. "With just the normal injuries I think we'll be a contender. And if we have a good year, injurywise, I think we'll be in the playoffs."

But the Broncos had anything but luck when it came to injuries in 1975. No fewer than 19 starters missed one or more games because of physical ailments. One two-week stretch saw three Broncos go down with broken legs. And the injury jinx didn't avoid the superstars, either. Running back Otis Armstrong, the biggest ground gainer in the league the year before, played only four games before bowing out with a deep hamstring pull.

So Denver wound up 6-8 and without that post-season spot it has sought since the inception of the American Football League in 1960.

If the squad remains healthy, Ralston should have the horses necessary to challenge Oakland in the West. The big question mark will be quarterback, which isn't the ideal place to have your big question mark. Charley Johnson has retired to a spot on Ralston's staff leaving the position to Steve Ramsey, who has filled in adequately upon occasion in recent seasons.

With Armstrong back and healthy, and with the offensive line retooled, the Broncos could be an offensive factor. Defensively Denver came on strong in the latter stages of last season as the linebacking unit of Joe Rizzo, Randy Gradishar, and Tom Jackson began to click. In the last five games, Bronco opponents averaged just 13 points.

OFFENSE

Ramsey, in his seventh season out of North Texas State, is first in line at quarterback after doing the bulk of the signal calling last year. Ramsey finished with 128 completions in 233 tries for 1562 yards and nine scores, but with 14 interceptions. Chief challenger is John Hufnagel, who showed great promise until a disastrous outing against Oakland in a Monday night game last year. Also in the hunt is Craig Penrose, a fourth-round draft pick generally considered the best pro prospect at his position in '75; Norris Weese, former WFL star; and Mike Franckowiak, who spent his rookie season as a running back.

Armstrong, who netted 1407 yards in '74, is fully recovered from his hamstring woes and ready to regain his spot as one of the foremost offensive threats in the game. Armstrong also is a fine receiver. He teams nicely with bullish Jon Keyworth, the leading rusher with 725 yards a year ago. The Broncos were expected to sign ex-Dolphin Jim Kiick, who could spell Armstrong upon occasion. Rookies Boom-Boom Betterson, Lonnie Perrin, and Don-



NO. 20—LOUIS WRIGHT

nie "Quick-Draw" McGraw will challenge Fran Lynch and Oliver Ross for backup posts. Floyd Little, one of the truly great runners and class individuals, has retired after nine years as Mr. Bronco.

When Ramsey, or whoever, goes to the air he'll find good targets in Haven Moses and Riley Odoms, with the latter continuing his claim as best tight end in the business. Odoms caught 40 passes a year ago, two less than teamleader Keyworth. Moses had 29 grabs and a 17.4 yard average per catch. Jack Dolbin, salvaged from the WFL, Billy Van Heusen, and exciting Rick Upchurch are the other wide targets with Upchurch including a 90-yarder among his 18 catches as a rookie last season. Odoms is backed by Boyd Brown, coming off a broken leg.

The Broncos particularly were hit in the offensive line a year ago and one of the wounded, tackle Mike Current, was lost to Tampa Bay in the expansion draft. So Ralston used his No. 1 draft pick to select Tom Glassic of Virginia and expects him to challenge vet Tommy Lyons at left guard. Paul Howard holds down the right guard with Claudie Minor moving to right tackle and Marv Montgomery switching to the left side. Bobby Maples, starting his 12th year, is the center. The Goodman brothers, Harvey and Brian, plus Corny Johnson, Bart Buetow, and Carl Schaukowitz, if he's recovered from a broken leg, are vying for guard posts while Stan Rogers supports the tackles and Phil Olsen backs up at center.

DEFENSE

Key to further development of the defense could be in the line where Stan Jones returns as Ralston's aid. Paul Smith, who reached All-Pro status in Jones' first Bronco hitch, hasn't regained that level after limping through a few campaigns with injuries. If he's not ready this time he

could lose his tackle job to second-year man Rubin Carter, a backup last year. Lyle Alzado, a strong pass rusher, is the other tackle with Barney Chavous and John Grant the ends. Two Smiths, Ed and Charley, return from injuries to challenge at the terminals while rookie Randy Moore of Arizona State could be a factor at tackle.

The Rizzo-Gradishar-Jackson trio jelled in the closing weeks of last year and is a young, up-and-coming linebacking set. Rizzo, a free agent, is in his third year out of the Merchant Marine Academy. Gradishar was the Ohio State All-America three years back while Jackson, out of Louisville, is in his fourth season. Another youngster, Rob Swenson, made the club as a free agent last year and now is rated the No. 4 backer ahead of vets Ray May and Jim O'Malley. Rookies Jim Lisko (outside) and John Huddleston (middle) are darkhorse candidates.

Kurt Knoff, the second-round draft pick out of Kansas, could move into the secondary at free safety if he has recovered from knee surgery. Knoff could join the steady Bill Thompson, undersized but effective Calvin Jones, and Louie Wright, who showed flashes of brilliance as a rookie cornerback last year, in the defensive backfield. An added plus could be Clarence Ellis, the former Notre Dame star whose career is in jeopardy after a serious knee injury last year. Also around are vets John Rowser, Earle Thomas, and Randy Polt, with Chuck Beatty and Chuck Detweiler returning from WFL exiles. Steve Foley, drafted a year ago, will seek a safety spot, as will Rick Volk, waived in from Baltimore.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jim Turner and Van Heusen are the incumbent kickers, with the latter facing a challenge from Wilbur Summers of Louisville. Perrin or Franckowiak could handle the kickoff chores. Upchurch, with an 11.6 punt return average and a 27.1 kickoff return mark, is one of the finer runback men in the league.

1975 Season Results

DENVER (6-8)		
37	*Kansas City	33
23	*Green Bay	13
14	Buffalo	38
9	Pittsburgh	20
16	*Cleveland	15
13	Kansas City	26
17	*Oakland	42
16	*Cincinnati	17
27	San Diego	17
21	Atlanta	35
13	*San Diego	10
10	Oakland	17
25	*Philadelphia	10
13	Miami	14

* DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

San Diego Chargers

HEAD COACH: TOMMY PROTHRO

The San Diego Chargers have been making headlines in recent years, but those headlines have centered around coaching changes, trading of dissatisfied players, front-office turmoil, decreasing attendance figures, and last but not least, involvement in drugs. Unfortunately for Charger fans, the San Diego crew hasn't been getting much ink as a winning football team.

But armed with a new spirit of '76, coach Tommy Prothro thinks his club, which didn't win until the 12th week of 1975 and wound up with a 2-12 mark, is ready to show the results of his rebuilding program. "At this time last year we were set at maybe 10 to 13 positions," he said. "This year I think not more than three or four players will start who weren't with us last year."

Prothro made some interesting draft picks, gearing the selections to the offense in hopes of matching the fine job he did in reshaping the defense a year ago. But the most important Charger pickup of the off-season was assistant coach Bill Walsh, the offensive co-ordinator who developed Cincinnati's great passing game. San Diego was dead last in total offense in the AFC last year and only New Orleans in the entire NFL gained less yardage.

"Our offense is going to be one of the top five in the conference," said quarterback Dan Fouts. "That's what Coach Walsh said, and I believe him." And why not? The Bengals, using Walsh's design and Ken Anderson's arm, were the top passing team in the league last year.

Whether Fouts and the Charger receivers measure up to Anderson and his crew is yet to be determined. But San Diego certainly should be a more formidable force on offense this season.

OFFENSE

Five of Prothro's first six draft picks were used on offensive players, the No. 1 choice being the exciting Joe Washington of Oklahoma. The scatback reminds many of Johnny Rodgers, the Heisman Trophy winner who eluded San Diego after being selected in the first round of the '74 draft. Rodgers now is starring in Canada, but the Chargers are hopeful Washington will make the fans forget about the squirming one who got away.

Washington at 5-10, 184 is Oklahoma's career rushing leader with 3995 yards, a 6.1 average, and 30 touchdowns. In addition he caught 88 passes, ran back 39 kickoffs, and returned 13 punts. And Sooner coach Barry Switzer claimed his man was a better blocker than some of the bigger backs taken in the early rounds of the draft.

Where Washington will fit in is uncertain, however, since Don Woods, a 1162-yard rusher in 1974, returns after knee surgery



NO. 50—DON GOODE

which cost him the bulk of the '75 campaign. Woods and Washington both are halfbacks, as is Rickey Young, who led the team with 577 yards as a rookie last season. Fullback Bo Matthews will be backed by James Harrison, the former Bear who missed all of '75, and Tony Baker. With this assortment of backs, San Diego should get something going on the ground.

In the air it will be up to the 6-3, 204-pound Fouts to get things in motion. The former Oregon star was 54-per cent accurate a year ago but threw just two scoring passes. He missed five games with another in a string of injuries which has hampered him in his three pro seasons. In reserve is Jesse Freitas, who threw for five TDs in 110 attempts in '75, and former WFLers Sonny Sixkiller and Alvin White.

The Chargers lacked a long-ball receiving threat last year, but the acquisition of Charlie Joiner from Walsh's old Bengal club plus the drafting of Larry Dorsey and Artie Owens should solve that problem. Joiner caught 37 passes for a 19.6 average in '75 while Dorsey, (6-1, 184), a No. 3 pick out of Tennessee State, and 26 career touchdown receptions in college. Owens (5-10, 170), drafted on the fourth round, was a running back at West Virginia. The newcomers join old reliable Gary Garrison and Dwight McDonald, both good short-range catchers. WFLers Terry Lindsey and John Tuttle also are in contention. Tight end Pat Curran dusted off six years of Rams' cobwebs to catch 45 passes a year ago. He's backed by Chuck Bradley and rookie Ron Singleton.

Youth is creeping into the offensive line, one of San Diego's stronger areas. Booker Brown, in his second year, and rookie Don Macek could be starting at tackle and guard, respectively. Macek was a No. 2 draft pick. Vets Doug Wilkerson, an unsung player, Ed Flanagan, Russ Washington, and Terry Owens, plus reserves Mark Markovich, Billy Shields, and Halvor Hagen

(from Buffalo), make this a deep area.

DEFENSE

Three rookies wound up as starters on the Chargers' front wall a year ago, with giant tackle Louie Kelcher (6-5, 282) leading the way. Kelcher was joined by Gary "Big Hands" Johnson at tackle while Fred Dean had seven sacks from his end spot. Rounding out the front four will be John Terrinck, a former tackle starter who'll shift to end. Reserve strength must come from ex-Notre Dame Kevin Nosbusch and the free agents, including ex-WFLer Charles DeJurnett, former CFLer Bud Magrum, and ex-Viking Art Riley.

Prothro went with a linebacking corps of Don Goode, Tom Graham, and Floyd Rice for most of last season but only Goode, a coming star, appears set for '76 (if he recovers from off-season shoulder surgery, that is). Charles Anthony, out all of '75, and ex-Raider Mike Dennery will challenge Graham in the middle while Rice will be pushed by former Saint Rick Middleton, Billy Andrews, and Drew Mahalic on the weak side. Rookies Bob Horn, in the middle, and Woody Lowe, Ray Preston, and Clarence Sanders on the outside make this a well-protected area.

Chris Fletcher, the free safety, is the standout in the defensive backfield which had two rookie starters, strong safety Mike Fuller and cornerback Mike Williams, last season. Tom Hayes, obtained from the Falcons, should work in at the other corner with return specialist Danny Colbert, special teamer Maurice Tyler, and ex-WFLer Hal Stringert in reserve.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Ray Wersching, the placekicker, improved in '75 but faces several challenges, especially from eighth-round pick Tony DiRienzo of Oklahoma. Veteran Dennis Par-tee, just a 36.7 punter a year ago, could be displaced by quarterback White, who averaged 41.5 in the WFL. Washington should add zip to the kick return game which also includes Fuller, Colbert, and Young.

1975 Season Results

SAN DIEGO (2-12)

0	*Pittsburgh	37
17	Houston	33
0	*Oakland	6
10	*Los Angeles	13
10	*Kansas City	12
0	Oakland	25
24	N.Y. Giants	35
19	*New England	33
17	*Denver	27
13	Minnesota	28
10	Denver	13
28	Kansas City	20
24	*N.Y. Jets	16
17	Cincinnati	47

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Tampa Bay Buccaneers

HEAD COACH: JOHN MCKAY

The key word in most interpretations of John McKay's leaving Southern California for the expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers was "challenge." But McKay himself calls it more of a "change" than a "challenge."

"I had been doing one thing for a long time, and I wanted to try something else," he said. "My wife and I had raised our children, and we thought if we were going to change, now was the time."

The 53-year-old McKay had won 127 games, lost 40, and tied eight in 16 years at Southern Cal, making him one of the most sought-after college coaches by the pro executives. Tampa Bay gained his services with a hefty money package which McKay claims is not as extensive as some reports have said.

But whatever McKay is making he'll earn in these formative years of the Bucs. With the aid of Ron Wolf, former Oakland whiz, McKay collected a decent bunch of veterans in the expansion (or allocation) draft and came up with Oklahoma's Leroy Selmon, the top undergraduate player a year ago, in the collegiate draft. The Bucs also acquired Steve Spurrier from San Francisco to quarterback them through the growing years.

McKay realizes, however, it isn't going to be easy. "The records of expansion teams aren't that outstanding at first," he said, "and that's something I have to accept. But if we pick right in the draft and teach the players right, we should have a respectable team. It would be a mistake to try to win too fast. I don't want to do everything for a victory or two when the principle idea is to build a football team."

OFFENSE

The acquisition of Spurrier from the 49ers was a natural since the ex-Florida Heisman Trophy winner should attract his share of the fans to the Tampa Bay games. Just how much zip the 30-year-old, nine-year veteran has left in his arm is another matter. In Frisco he had trouble beating out ancient Norm Snead. Last season Spurrier was 102 of 207 for 1151 yards and five TDs with seven interceptions. In the backup race are Bill Cappleman, former Florida State star; James Foote, No. 3 at Houston two years ago; and draftees Parnell Dickinson of Mississippi Valley and Jack Berry of Washington and Lee.

Wolf leaned heavily upon his former Oakland team for running backs, taking Harold Hart and Louis Carter in the expansion pickings. And the Bucs chose Jimmy DuBose, another local hero from the Florida Gators, in the college draft. It's very likely two of those three will be the starting runners since Anthony Davis, McKay's former USC standout, is tied up in Canada for another few years. Hart had 173 yards for the Raiders in '75 and led the AFC in



RB HAROLD HART

kickoff returns with a 30.5 average. Carter, a multi-talented athlete from Maryland, missed most of his rookie year with injuries. DuBose, 5-11, 215, had 2159 career yards at Florida. Other vet runners are Vince Kendrick (Atlanta), Morris LeGrand (New Orleans), and former Trojan Manfred Moore (San Francisco).

The receiving corps is undistinguished although Barry Smith (Florida State and Green Bay) is experienced. Free agents Louis Neal, Wayne Wheeler, Don Westbrook, plus Lawrence Williams from the Chiefs and Richard Appleby (fourth round) from Georgia are other outside possibilities. Bob Moore, one-time Oakland starter (19 catches last year), should be the tight end with John Andrews and Fred Pagac, journeymen pros, and rookie Brad Jenkins in contention for the backup spot.

Tampa Bay came away with several experienced offensive linemen in the expansion draft, including some starters who should move right in as protectors for Spurrier and hole-openers for the runners. David Thompson (Saints) and Mike Current (Broncos) are established tackles, although Thompson can play center, too. Howard Fest (Bengals) and Ira Gordon (Chargers) were first-stringers at their last stops. And John Ward had come back from two years of inactivity because of a broken leg to play both at center and guard for the Vikings. Steeler backup David Reavis, third-round pick Steve Young, a 6-8, 270-pounder from Colorado; and fifth-round choice Steve Wilson of Georgia are other tackle hopefuls. Everett Charles Little, a

6-5, 275-pounder from Houston (fourth round), Bruce Welch of Texas A&M, Tom Alward of Nebraska, and journeyman Larry Gagner are guard possibilities. Dan Ryczek (Redskins) will battle Ward and maybe Thompson at center.

DEFENSE

There's little doubt Tampa Bay's best player in 1976 will be Leroy Selmon, one of the most-gifted collegiate linemen in years. "He has great quickness and lateral movement, and he's the type of player from which you can build a defensive line," said McKay. "His leadership ability is another plus." The 6-3, 262-pound Leroy, projected as an end, might be joined by brother Dewey on the line as Tampa Bay, in a great coup, nabbed the other Selmon on the second round. Dewey is 6-1, 275, and is pencilled in as a tackle although he played noseguard at Oklahoma. The rest of the front four could come from vets Dave Pear (Baltimore), Council Rudolph (St. Louis), Mitch Sutton (Philadelphia), Pete Duranko (Denver), Steve Chomyszak (Cincinnati), and CFLer Bubba Bridges.

Larry Ball (Detroit), Jimmy Gunn (Giants), and Cal Peterson (Dallas) were the best of the expansion linebackers chosen by the Bucs. Ball was a reserve on the Miami Super Bowl squads; Gunn performed for McKay at Southern Cal before his pro experiences at Chicago and New York; and Peterson was used on some of the special defenses by the Cowboys last year. Larry Ely and Bubba Broussard (Bears), and Steve "Rocky" Colavito (Eagles) were other expansion picks; Steve Reese (Jets) and Jim (no relation to Cal) Peterson (Rams) were obtained in trades; and Steve Maughan of Utah State (No. 3), Sid Smith of Brigham Young (No. 10), and Tommy West of Tennessee (No. 16) were obtained in the college draft.

Veteran strong safety Jim Kearney from Kansas City and rookie Mike Washington, who missed all of last season with Baltimore, could sparkle in the Bucs' secondary. Kearney was tabbed in the expansion draft while Washington came via the trade route. Frank Oliver (Buffalo), Joe Blahak (Minnesota), and rookies Curtis Jordan of Texas Tech and Mel Washington of Colorado State are corner possibilities along with Mike Washington. There are a horde of safeties with Earl Douthitt (Chicago), Ricky Davis (Cincinnati), Durwood Keeton (New England), Mark Cotney (Houston), and Ken Stone (Washington) joining Jim Kearney.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Tampa Bay was testing numerous kickers but had veteran punters Randy Walker and Steve Broussard on its roster. Key return man could be Carl Roaches, a 5-7, 163 pounder who had five returns for TDs at Texas A&M.



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Baltimore Colts

HEAD COACH: TED MARCHIBRODA

Construction was halted on a project in Baltimore last fall, but the stoppage wasn't due to lack of funds, rather lack of reason. The barge being built by Colt fans, the one on which Joe Thomas was to float down the Chesapeake and out of sight, never was completed although five weeks into the season it was the chief aim of the Colt followers.

But from the 1-4 ruins of the early season grew a club of championship caliber, what the Baltimore fans had been accustomed to until the arrival of Thomas a few years back. The general manager, who had built title teams in Minnesota and Miami, had the same goal in Baltimore. But to build the Colts, however, he first had to tear down the remnants of the Super Bowl champs of 1971, then find the right man to orchestrate the urban renewal project on the field.

Ted Marchibroda turned out to be that man. The former Redskin assistant turned a 2-12 team into a 10-4 outfit, including a string of nine consecutive wins after the less than auspicious beginning.

Just what sparked the comeback is something coaches throughout the league wish they knew, but generally it was a combination of Marchibroda's handling and the development of the young talent accumulated by Thomas. The Colts became a loose bunch, with one aim—to win.

And, in the background, Joe Thomas sat back and watched his building program take shape. The Colts look to be two or three players away from a Super Bowl title. And don't bet against Thomas finding those guys before the end of 1976.

OFFENSE

Jones, the 6-3, 212-pound sparkler from LSU, made it big in his third pro season, ranking third in the AFC with 203 completions in 344 tries for 2483 yards and 18 touchdowns. He was intercepted just eight times. And his leadership development surprised even Marchibroda. Most shocking of all, however, was Jones' rank as the second leading ball carrier on the team with his 321 yards and 6.8 average. "His running is a big part of our offense," admitted Marchibroda. Injuries knocked Jones out a few times last year but Marty Domres, 8 of 10 passing last year, and Bill Troup, reacquired from the Eagles, are able reserves.

Lydell Mitchell again drew support as the most valuable player in the league with his 1193 yards rushing, third in the NFL; 60 receptions, which tied him for second in the league; and 15 TDs. Finding a running mate for the former Penn State star is one of Thomas' problems. He thought he had a shot at Larry Csonka before Zonk signed on with the Giants. Bill Olds, last year's fullback, was lost in the expansion draft, leaving the talented but brittle Roo-



NO. 75—GEORGE KUNZ

sevelt Leaks, short-yardage specialist Tom McCauley, and the injured-last-year Kim Jones as possible starters. Ron Lee, a sleeper draft pick out of West Virginia, will challenge.

Receiving, Baltimore style, is adequate although Roger Carr, if his development continues, could become one of the top catchers in the league. Carr averaged 22.5 for each of his 23 receptions. The shorter zones are well manned by Glenn Doughty, an outstanding blocker who caught 39 passes last year; Raymond Chester, who chipped in with 38 receptions out of his tight end spot; and of course, Mitchell. There is speed in outside reserves Freddie Scott and Marshall Johnson and strength in back-up tight end Jamie Kennedy. But even Marchibroda admits there is room for improvement in the pass-catching area.

Ken Huff, the No. 1 draft pick; Ed George, former All-Star in Canada; and Forrest Blue, onetime All-NFL center at San Francisco, were supposed to move into the offensive line last year. But Huff couldn't oust former North Carolina teammate Robert Pratt at left guard; George couldn't budge incumbent left tackle David Taylor; and Blue played second-string pivot to the small but explosive Ken Mendenhall. George Kunz did move in from Atlanta to take over at right tackle and join the previously mentioned starters and guard Elmer Collett in forming a solid offensive wall. Bob Van Dwyne adds even more depth.

DEFENSE

The improvement in the Colts was most noticeable on the defensive front wall, which helped record 59 quarterback sacks compared to just 21 in 1974. Big John Dutton (6-7, 268) led the assault with 17 while smallish Fred Cook (6-4, 247) added 16½ from the other end. Ehrmann had

nine and Mike Barnes, the other tackle, eight to account for all but 8½ of the quarterback dumps. Joining the reserves will be Ken Novak, the 6-7, 275-pounder from Purdue who will replace Dave Pear (an expansion loss) as the backup tackle. Glenn Robinson, hurt part of last year, supports the ends.

The departure of Mike Curtis to Seattle ends an era of outstanding middle line-backing in Baltimore, but it was the development of ex-Pat and ex-Bill Jim Cheyonski which solidified the Colt backers in '75. Cheyonski, while not the prototype middle linebacker, gets the job done in a fiery, enthusiastic manner. Stan White, who set a league record for linebackers with eight interceptions, and Tom MacLeod are among the truly underrated players of the league. Derril Luce, a special teams ace as a rookie last year, Dan Dickel, and Mike Varty are the experienced backups but rookies Sanders Shiver from Carson-Newman and Ed Simonini from Texas A&M are highly rated.

Thomas brought in Jackie Wallace (Vikings) to play strong safety and Lloyd Mumphord (Dolphins) to play left corner and complete a defensive backfield which helped improve the Colts' interception total from 10 to 29 in one season. Wallace moved out vet Rick Volk, since sent to Denver. Mumphord faces a fight from Doug Nettles, whom he displaced a year ago. Vets Nelson Munsey and Bruce Laird round out the secondary with Ray Oldham, outstanding on special teams, and Randy Hall in reserve.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Toni Linhart had just 10 field goals a year ago but earned his keep with the 31 yarder that beat Miami in overtime late in the year. David Lee, only survivor from the Super Bowl V champs, averaged 39.6 per kick and faces a challenge from draft pick Mike Kirkland, also a quarterback possibility from Arkansas. Pint-sized Howard Stevens and Laird handle most of the return work in creditable fashion.

1975 Season Results

BALTIMORE (10-4)

35	Chicago	7
20	Oakland	31
13	Los Angeles	24
31	Buffalo	38
10	New England	21
45	N.Y. Jets	28
21	Cleveland	7
42	Buffalo	35
52	N.Y. Jets	19
33	Miami	17
28	Kansas City	14
21	N.Y. Giants	0
10	Miami	7
34	New England	21

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Miami Dolphins

HEAD COACH: DON SHULA

He's coached in four Super Bowls, and won two of them. He's been in five championship games, and won four of them. He's been in eight playoff games, and won five of them. His teams almost always are playing after the bulk of the National Football League clubs have called it a season.

Don Shula did not make the playoffs last year, but some maintain his handling of the Miami Dolphins in 1975 was the greatest coaching job he has managed in his 13 successful seasons. Guiding a team depleted by World Football League defections and an incredible string of injuries to a 10-4 mark and to the doorstep of the playoffs was a true work of genius.

Before the season even began Shula had to offset the losses of Larry Csonka, Jim Kick, and Paul Warfield to the WFL. Then the injuries began to mount up—Nick Buoniconti, Dick Anderson, Bob Heinz, Mike Kolen, Manny Fernandez, Bob Griese, Earl Morrall—it sounds like the AFC Pro Bowl roster.

Yet Shula was able to come up with replacements sturdy enough to do the job and, until Baltimore's Toni Linhart managed an overtime field goal in the next-to-last game of the season, the Dolphins were in good position to grab another AFC Eastern title.

As often is the case with an injury-riddled team, the outlook is that much brighter the next year because replacements thrown into the breach have had some experience. So even if the injured regulars fail to return, as might be the case with Buoniconti and possibly Anderson, there is some experience at their positions.

So Shula should be bidding for another post-season berth this time around.

OFFENSE

Griese was rolling merrily along with a 62% completion average and 14 touchdowns in 10 games before succumbing to a toe injury. Morrall stepped in, but soon was forced out with a knee injury. That gave young Don Strock a chance to quarterback and the strong-armed youngster did okay while working with a conservative game plan. He beat Buffalo, lost the squeaker to Baltimore, and helped defeat Denver in three outings. Griese is back, however, to run the Miami machine with greybeard Morrall, in his 21st season, and the finally experienced Strock in reserve.

Shula had hoped to regain Csonka for 1976 but money matters prevented that. So he'll go once again with a stable of good running backs, led by Mercury Morris, who gained 875 yards last year. Morris and Ben Malone (220 yards and an ankle injury last year) are the halfbacks with sawed-off Don Nottingham (718 yards and 12TDs) and Norm Bulaich (309 yards and 32 receptions) alternating at fullback. Stan



NO. 83—VERN DEN HERDER

Winfrey, a little-used rookie last year, plus draftees Gary Davis and J. Dexter Pride also are available.

The receiving corps could use a dash of speed and Shula provided that on his third-round pick by selecting Duriel Harris, a burner from New Mexico State. He'll join Nat Moore, the team leader with 40 receptions last year, Howard Twilley, Freddie Solomon (22 catches as a rookie in '75), and Cotton Speyrer in the outside areas. Jim Mandich, the regular tight end, has plenty of competition from Andre Tillman, last year's backup; Jim McFarland, injured after six games last season; and rookie Loaird McCreary, a heavily endowed but very raw youngster from Tennessee State drafted on the second round.

The return of Wayne Moore at left tackle solidified the offensive line which the previous season had been a source of consternation for the coach. Now, however, Shula must replace right tackle Norm Evans, selected by Seattle in the expansion draft. Darryl Carlton, top draft pick a year ago out of Tampa, and journeyman Tom Drougas are the top candidates with two rookies, Bob Simpson of Colorado and Randy Young of Iowa State in the fight. Moore, guards Larry Little and Tom Kuechenberg, and center Jim Langer are set. But Ed Newman will have to fight off rookies Mel Mitchell and Joe Ingersoll to retain his backup guard spot.

DEFENSE

The injuries to Fernandez and Heinz gave youngsters Randy Crowder and Donald Reese a good chance to perform at the defensive tackle posts, and both played well, giving Shula a luxurious problem in that area. Vern Den Herder and Bill

Stanfill remain as topflight defensive ends, with John Andrews in reserve. Rookie John Owens of Tennessee State will be looking for work at end.

Steve Towle is an example of a player who gained experience as an injury replacement. The rookie from Kansas led the team in tackles and now is the No. 1 middle linebacker as Buoniconti is eased into his law office. Bob Lally, ex-Memphis Grizzlies, could be the backup in the middle. With Doug Swift and Bruce Elia gone in the expansion draft, Shula selected Larry Gordon, a tough outside man from Arizona State, on the first round and followed that selection with the choice of Kim Bokamp, who'll be groomed as Bob Matheson's replacement in the '53" setup. Mike Kolen returns to the weakside, backed by Ernie Rhone, a free agent find last year.

A rift between Shula and Jake Scott had escalated so much both coach and free safety agreed it would be best for Scott to move on. If that happens, young Barry Hill will get first shot at replacing the man who led the team in interceptions with six and who constantly rates among the better safeties. Charlie Babb played well at strong safety, where Anderson seeks to return after a year lost to knee surgery. Curtis Johnson remains at the right corner while Jeris White and Tim Foley will battle on the left flank. Sleeper rookie might be Gary Fencik, a wide receiver from Yale who'll get a shot in the secondary.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Garo Yepremian had a weird season, missing more extra points (6 of 46) than he did field goals (3 of 16). Mike Green, a draftee from Ohio U., will pressure the Cypriot sidewheeler in training camp. Larry Seiple's punting norm fell off to 38.6 but his versatility (he caught 10 passes running Kick's old routes out of the backfield) makes him a valuable man. Solomon did the bulk of the kick returning last year, with Nat Moore and Hubert Ginn helping out with the kickoffs and Moore and Babb aiding with the punts.

1975 Season Results

MIAMI (10-4)		
21	*Oakland	31
22	New England	14
31	Green Bay	7
24	*Philadelphia	16
43	N.Y. Jets	0
35	Buffalo	30
46	Chicago	13
27	*N.Y. Jets	7
19	Houston	20
17	*Baltimore	33
20	*New England	7
31	*Buffalo	21
7	Baltimore	10
14	*Denver	13

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Buffalo Bills

HEAD COACH: LOU SABAN

Those who say the offense has gone out of pro football obviously didn't watch many Buffalo Bills games in 1975. The Bills were involved in several games which reminded many of the early days of the American Football League, when defense virtually was nonexistent. Buffalo and foes ran up such scores as 30-21, 38-31, 35-30, 42-35, 33-24, 45-31, 32-14, and 31-21 during the season.

Buffalo won eight of those 14 games in which the lowest point total for one team was 10, recorded by Denver in a 38-10 Bills' triumph. With O.J. Simpson having another outstanding year, and Joe Ferguson arriving as both a passer and signal caller, there was little doubt the Bills would score.

But with a secondary depleted by injury before the season even started, and linebackers sometimes in awe of the offensive show going on around them, coach Lou Saban was lucky to bring his club in over the .500 mark. After a 4-0 start, the Bills tripped over the lowly New York Giants, and it was downhill after that.

Things got so bad defensively Saban resorted to a three-man front, although he wasn't particularly infatuated with the idea. He's not quite sure how many men he'll have on his defensive front wall this year, and probably won't know until several weeks of training camp have past. But one thing Saban does know: the defense must get better, or his somewhat tenuous position with the Bills could worsen.

He drafted several people who might help, and naturally looks forward to regaining some of the injured players who missed last year. But it wouldn't be surprising to see the general manager-coach trade away some of that offensive excess to obtain more defensive help. After all, it's been established you win with defense.

OFFENSE

No less an authority than O.J. himself will tell you it's been the development of Ferguson at quarterback which has meant the most to the Buffalo offense—the best overall in the National Football League last year. Ferguson, in his third season, was seventh in the NFL with 53 per cent completions, 2426 yards, 25 touchdowns (tied with Fran Tarkenton for the league high), and 17 interceptions. He led the Bills to at least two TDs in every game and to 420 points, an average of 30 per contest. Behind him are Gary Marangi, 13-of-33 in his second year, and rookie Scott Gardner, an eighth-round draft pick from Virginia.

Simpson, 29, had one of those spectacular years now becoming commonplace with him, rushing for 1817 yards, a 5.5 average, and 16 TDs, and catching 28 passes for seven more scores. He tallied at least once in every Buffalo game, four times in a 45-31 win over New England. His running mate, hard-charging, good-



NO. 12—JOE FERGUSON

blocking Jim Braxton, added 823 yards as the Bills copped the league rushing crown. Depth is thin, with Vic Washington, coming off knee surgery, No. 1 man behind both starters. Rookies Darnell Powell, Bobby Joe Easter, and Joe Lowery, plus Roland Hooks, who missed last year with an injury, are among the hopefuls.

Ferguson had Bob Chandler (55 catches) and J.D. Hill (36) as top targets a year ago. The receiving picture could brighten if Ahmad Rashad, injured a year ago, decides to remain with the Bills. He had played out his option. Otherwise rookie Scott Piper and John Holland will be in reserve. Tight end boasts Paul Seymour, a powerful blocker, and Reuben Gant, who could play wide receiver, plus a newcomer, highly regarded Fred Coleman from Northeast Louisiana.

The Electric Company, which turns on The Juice, is back intact with tackles Dave Foley and Donnie Green, guards Reggie McKenzie and Joe DeLamielleure, and center Mike Montler. The unit has improved its pass blocking through the years, allowing only 22 sacks last year. Veterans Bill Adams and Willie Parker will back up the guards and center, respectively, while a rookie, Joe Devlin of Iowa, moves in as the reserve tackle. Devlin was selected on the second round.

DEFENSE

Four men, or three? The defensive line situation could depend upon the development of rookies Ken Jones and Ben Williams. Jones, an offensive guard at Arkansas State, had played a year of noseguard while Williams also played in the middle at Ole Miss. Both are projected as ends,

however, and if they make it that could free Earl Edwards to play tackle alongside Mike Kadish, or Don Croft, or Jeff Winans, or Jeff Yeates. If not, Williams could wind up a noseguard flanked by Edwards and Winans. Mark Johnson, a linebacker last year; also will be tried at end.

Three men, or four? Depending upon the settlement of the defensive line, and the development of youngsters Tom Ruud, Bob Nelson, and Marv Krakau, Saban has the option of going either way. John Skrupan will be set at one outside spot and Ruud, in his second year, could handle the other. Krakau, Nelson (out all of last year with an injury), Doug Allen, and John McCrumbley will battle for the inside spot(s). Also around are Bo Cornell and draft pick Dan Jilek of Michigan, an outside possibility.

An almost unbelievable string of bad luck destroyed the Buffalo secondary in pre-season last year. All-Star corner Robert James was lost for the season with a knee injury; Tony Greene, a standout in '74, also was injured and, when he returned, had to play cornerback rather than his free safety post; Doug Jones, a projected starter at strong safety, was kayoed. Only Dwight Harrison, who had a good year with eight interceptions, avoided the jinx. James' return has been slow so Saban drafted Mario Clark, a slick corner out of Oregon, on the first round. He'll be tested at James' left corner spot. Doug Jones will battle Ed Jones, the regular last year, at strong safety with Greene moving back to free safety. Rookies Jackie Williams and Keith Moody, a sleeper from Syracuse, also are in the picture with last year's stopgaps, Ike Thomas, Steve Freeman, and Royce McKinney, still around.

SPECIAL TEAMS

John Leypoldt's placekicking job will be threatened by Bob Berg, a 17th-round pick with good credentials out of New Mexico. Marv Bateman (41.6) returns as the punter. Runbacks will be handled by Washington, Hooks, McKinney, and rookies Powell, Moody, and Easter.

1975 Season Results

BUFFALO (8-6)		
42	*N.Y. Jets	14
30	Pittsburgh	21
38	*Denver	10
38	Baltimore	31
14	*N.Y. Giants	17
30	*Miami	35
24	N.Y. Jets	23
35	*Baltimore	42
24	Cincinnati	33
45	*New England	31
32	St. Louis	14
21	Miami	31
34	New England	14
13	*Minnesota	35

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

New England Patriots

HEAD COACH: CHUCK FAIRBANKS

An era has ended in the Boston area, an era which was supposed to see the New England (née Boston) Patriots regenerate into a power in the National Football League. Catalyst for that rebirth was to be Jim Plunkett, the extremely talented quarterback from Stanford who was the first player picked in the 1971 draft.

Plunkett's entrance into Boston was more heralded than any of the city's other superstars, greater than Bobby Orr's, Bill Russell's, or Carl Yastrzemski's. After pulling off a few great things as a rookie, however, the Plunkett magic cooled off, sputtered again in 1974, then disappeared last year when shoulder and knee injuries cost him most of the season.

So when Steve Grogan, whose entry into New England was as unheralded as Plunkett's was heralded, showed promise at quarterback last year, coach Chuck Fairbanks figured this would be the best time to end the Plunkett era. So he shipped the quarterback to San Francisco, Plunkett's home area, for quarterback Tom Owen and several top draft picks.

With two first-round selections from San Francisco, plus their own, the Pats were able to snap up two of the few real blue-chippers in the drafting crop, cornerback Mike Haynes and center Pete Brock, plus safety Tim Fox who rated just a notch below the super level.

Perhaps the Grogan Era will be able to produce something the Plunkett Era never did—a winning Patriot football team.

OFFENSE

Grogan surprised everyone with his success in his first year out of Kansas State, where he gained little notoriety because of a poor supporting cast. He completed 51% of his passes for 1976 yards and 11 touchdowns with 18 interceptions. Owen was the top rookie quarterback in the league with the 49ers in 1974 but slipped to the No. 3 spot behind Norm Snead and Steve Spurrier last season. Fairbanks, however, thinks the competition between the two youngsters (Grogan is 23, Owen 24) will enliven the training camp. "Much of our team's success will depend on how rapidly they become consistent performers," said Fairbanks.

Sam (Bam) Cunningham, with 666 yards, and Andy Johnson, with 488 after taking over for the vanquished Mac Heron, did an adequate job on the ground last year. But Fairbanks is looking for more speed in the persons of Allen Carter, a backup last year, and Ike Forte, a 6-1, 196-pounder drafted in the second round. Forte, while not as heralded as some of the other college backs, did some fine work at Arkansas and could be a surprise in the pros. Don Calhoun, Joe Wilson, and Leon Crosswhite, the latter two out all last year with injuries, are other good-looking



NO. 14—STEVE GROGAN

fullback candidates.

With Plunkett gone, the status of Randy Vataha, who had teamed with the former quarterback since collegiate days, is questionable. Vataha, of course, led the players' workout a year ago. Darryl Stingley, Vataha, and second-year man Steve Burks are the returning vet receivers but free agents Harrison Davis and Willie Armstead, plus several rookies, will challenge. Russ Francis progressed admirably as a rookie tight end and finished with 35 catches. He is a potential superstar. Bob Windsor, out all last year, former Colt Ron Mayo, and ex-Bengal Al Chandler will fight for the backup spot.

Guard John Hannah, selected with Cunningham and Stingley in 1973 when the Pats also had three first-round selections, paces the offensive line which Fairbanks considers a strong point. Hannah teams with Steve Corbett, backed by Bill DuLac and Sam Adams. Bob McKay was acquired in a deal with Cleveland to bolster the tackle positions as Tom Neville (ankle injury) and Shelby Jordan (court case) were uncertainties. Steady Leon Gray is the other tackle. Brock, the best offensive lineman in collegiate football a year ago, will fight Bill Lankaitis for the center spot.

DEFENSE

The three-man defensive front, which Fairbanks sprung on opponents in 1974, wasn't as successful last year but injuries to Julius Adams had a lot to do with the dropoff. Adams, a budding All Pro, had foot problems all season. In addition, Art Moore, Mel Lunsford, and Craig Hanne-man suffered disabling injuries that hin-

dered the line play. With those four healthy again and Ray Hamilton, Tony McGee, Pete Cusick, Jerry Patton, and Martin Imhof also returning, Fairbanks looks for improved line play. Top rookie is Greg Boyd.

Steve Nelson earned club defensive MVP honors for his play in Fairbanks' 3-4 setup. Nelson and Sam Hunt do an excellent job patrolling the inside linebacker zones. Vets George Webster and Steve Zabel joined with young Steve King in holding down the outside spots a year ago. But Rod Shoate, a top draft pick out of Oklahoma a year ago, is expected to earn a starting spot this time. He was lost because of a leg injury after four games last season. Bob Geddes and Maury Damkroger, plus ex-Brown Steve Romanis-zyn and draft pick Donnie Thomas, are other hopefuls.

The secondary is due for a revamping as the early selections of Haynes and Fox plus the trading of Ron Bolton to Cleveland for McKay indicate. Haynes, a 6-2, 190-pound two-time All-America from Arizona State, should move right into Bolton's corner spot. Haynes also is a top return man. Fox, a hard hitter out of Ohio State, should grab a safety slot at the expense of either Prentice McCray or John Sanders. Bob Howard, the ex-Charger, is the other cornerback. Jim Massey, Dick Conn, and Tim Rudnick are veteran reserves but there is room for more rookie participation by Doug Beaudoin, a 6-1, 200-pounder from Minnesota, and Jim Jones, a kick returner out of Central Michigan.

SPECIAL TEAMS

The Patriots got good kicking from John Smith, who booted home 33 straight extra points and 9 of 17 field goal attempts in 1975, and Mike Patrick, who averaged 38.8 per punt as a rookie. Alan Pringle, a free agent from Rice, will challenge Smith. Haynes, Fox, Jones, and former Cowboy Dennis Morgan all are kick return possibilities as Herron and Leon McQuay, who did a good deal of the runbacks last year, have gone elsewhere.

1975 Season Results

NEW ENGLAND (3-11)

0	*Houston	7
14	*Miami	22
7	N.Y. Jets	36
10	Cincinnati	27
21	*Baltimore	10
24	*San Francisco	16
17	St. Louis	24
33	San Diego	19
31	*Dallas	34
31	Buffalo	45
7	Miami	20
28	*N.Y. Jets	30
14	*Buffalo	34
21	Baltimore	34

*DENOTES HOME GAME



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

New York Jets

HEAD COACH: LOU HOLTZ

Lou Holtz does a magic act as part of his after-dinner speaking repertoire and says he likes the rope trick the best. "If the people don't like the act you can always use the rope to hang yourself," explained the witty new head coach of the New York Jets.

Holtz had better keep that rope around because he's going to need plenty of magic to turn the Jets into a winning team. The optimism of a year ago, generated by six wins down the stretch in '74, vanished quickly in 1975 and resulted in coach Charley Winner getting the ax midway through the season.

The Jets' problems stemmed from locker room politics and other off-the-field troubles which eroded the club's desire to win. And Holtz' first order of business is to restore a fresh, winning attitude to the team.

Then there are two individual problems. Quarterback Joe Namath spent most of the off-season trying to peddle himself to Los Angeles. Just where he fits into the plans of the coach from North Carolina State had to be determined. And running back John Riggins, looking for a Namath-type salary, played out his option and signed with the Redskins.

But Holtz remained optimistic. He put the emphasis on character in his draft to help mold a new winning feeling in the locker room. He selected Alabama's Richard Todd as an eventual successor to Namath. And grabbed a free-agent runner of his own, Ed Marinaro, to replace Riggins.

"I know it's not going to be easy," he said. "But we're going to keep working until we get this thing turned around." A little magic here and there wouldn't hurt, either.

OFFENSE

Holtz and Namath talked things over during the spring and apparently reached an amicable decision on just what the high-priced quarterback would do in 1976. Namath is coming off a poor year with a league-high 28 interceptions. He was bothered by a hamstring injury which still posed something of a question entering the new season. Todd will be Holtz' quarterback, eventually. The coach loves the talent and the character of the new man from Alabama and will have him running a rollout type offense when he's in control.

Riggins became the first Jet to exceed the 1000-yard mark in rushing (1005) last year so it will take a heap of replacing to make up for his loss. Marinaro, who was an excellent pass catcher and blocker for the Vikings, and Steve Davis, the ex-Steeler, probably will be the starting combo. Robert Burns, injured all last year, and rookie James Richards are other fullback hopes. Carl Garrett, with 566 yards as the regular last year, will battle Davis at halfback. Vets Bob Gresham, Emerson Boozer



NO. 77—CARL BARZILAUSKAS

(if he returns), and Jazz Jackson, plus rookie Louie Giammona, are in reserve.

Jerome Barkum, Eddie Bell, and Richard Caster provide the Alabama quarterbacks with some topflight targets. Caster had 47 catches from his tight end spot while Barkum added 36 and Bell 20 from the outside posts. David Knight, injured all of last season, is back to challenge Bell while James Scott, also hurt a year ago, ex-Giant Eldridge Small, ex-Bengal Tim George, and rookie Ronnie Moore seek employment. Another draft pick, Don Buckey, comes with twin brother Dave, a quarterback, from Holtz' North Carolina State club. Willie Brister and rookie Darwin Willie support Caster.

The offensive line, long a pride and joy of the Jet fan, disintegrated at times last year, allowing 34 sacks and generally not performing up to par. Holtz has several new men who might work into the line but at first will go with veterans Winston Hill, entering his 14th season, and Robert Woods at the tackles; Randy Rasmussen, entering his 10th season, and Garry Puetz at the guards; and Wayne Mulligan at center. Gordie Browne (tackle), Darrell Austin (guard), and Joe Fields (center) are the veteran replacements but all could be moved out in favor of the new draftees. Tackle Steve King of Michigan would have been a first-round pick, according to Holtz, were it not for a knee injury. So the Jets got him on Round Five. Joe Davis, a tenacious performer from USC, will get a shot at guard while Al Gluchoski of West Virginia is a contender at center.

DEFENSE

Walt Michaels, who coordinated the defense in the Jet glory days, is back to see what he can do with the unit that gave up more yardage than any other last year. "At least we have some men to build with

up front," said Michaels, referring to defensive linemen Billy Newsome, Carl Barzilauskas, Ed Galigher, and Richard Neal. They recorded only 19 sacks last year with Barzo dropping off a great deal from his rookie season of 1974. But backed by Jim Bailey, Mark Lomas (injured all last year), and rookie Larry Faulk, the linemen are the key to the regeneration of the Jet defense.

The linebacking and secondary pictures are muddled. Only Godwin Turk, extremely inconsistent as a rookie, appears certain of a linebacking spot. The middle is wide open with perhaps Al Atkinson, an 11-year vet, regaining his slot, at the expense of Jamie Rivers and Ken Bernich. Rookies Greg Buttle, an All-America from that linebacker factory at Penn State, Bob Martin, and Lawrence Pillars all have good shots at making the club because they are hitters, according to Holtz. That leaves John Ebersole, Rich Lewis, and Richard Wood in vulnerable positions.

The lone bright spot on the defense last year was the development of Ed Taylor at free safety. His presence there might allow a pair of shifts, Phil Wise, the brittle one, from free to strong safety and Burgess Owens from strong safety to cornerback, to help a beleaguered secondary. Shafer Suggs, drafted on the second round, should move right into a cornerback spot at the expense of Rich Sowells or Roscoe Word. Delles Howell, Steve Tannen (injured in '75), George Hoey, and Carl Capria still are around.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Pat Leahy did a creditable job as the placekicker but punter Greg Gant had his problems and could be moved out by draftee Rick Faulk (no relation to Larry), who averaged 41.3 per kick at San Francisco State. Lou Piccone was last year's return man, but rookies Giammona, twice the nation's all-purpose yardage leader at Utah State, Moore, and free agent Ken Strayhorn are other possibilities.

1975 Season Results

NEW YORK JETS (3-11)

14	Buffalo	42
30	Kansas City	24
36	*New England	7
21	Minnesota	29
0	*Miami	43
28	*Baltimore	45
23	*Buffalo	24
7	Miami	27
19	Baltimore	52
6	*St. Louis	37
7	*Pittsburgh	20
30	New England	28
16	San Diego	24
21	*Dallas	31

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Dallas Cowboys

HEAD COACH: TOM LANDRY

It was supposed to be a rebuilding year for the Cowboys. Calvin Hill and others had defected to the WFL, Bob Lilly and Cornell Green retired, John Niland was traded, Walt Garrison was injured and the team was coming off an 8-6 season, a disastrous one by Dallas standards.

So Tom Landry just rebuilt the Cowboys a little faster than expected—all the way to the Super Bowl and a strong showing against Pittsburgh before losing, 21-17.

The prospects for 1976 are even brighter. Excepting Lee Roy Jordan, Ralph Neely, Dave Edwards and Mel Renfro, this is a young club as evidenced by the fact that 12 rookies made the 43-man roster in '75 and 27 players had three or less years of experience.

Landry, now in his 17th year with Dallas and the dean of NFL coaches with the retirement of Cincinnati's Paul Brown, knows his team is of usual playoff caliber.

"However, we won't surprise many people this time because when you come out of the Super Bowl everyone expects you to be as good as you were getting there," he said, "so I feel our opposition will be much stronger in our games this season."

The Cowboys, who made the Super Bowl as a wild card team last year, are probably in the NFL's toughest division, the NFC East. Still, it would be surprising if the talent-rich Cowboys didn't make the playoffs again. That's where they belong.

OFFENSE

As Landry sees it, the offense is set for '76, and why not? The Cowboys led the NFL in total yards last season and have one of the best quarterbacks in the league in Roger Staubach; an outstanding offensive line, good receivers and capable backs.

Staubach, after an off season in '74, came back impressively last year. Landry says Roger was the stabilizing force of the entire team. He has it all: brains, leadership, a strong arm and those nimble feet. He was the NFC's No. 2 rated passer behind Minnesota's Fran Tarkenton and completed 56.9% of his passes for 2666 yards and 17 touchdowns. He's backed up by the exciting bomb thrower, Clint Longley, and the Cowboys' "bonus" pick—Danny White, who moves over from Memphis of the defunct WFL where he was a star. White also is an excellent punter.

The Cowboys weren't expected to have much of a running game with Hill jumping to the WFL and Garrison incapacitated. But Landry says that last year's runners were the finest he has ever had from the standpoint of cohesiveness; working together and complementing each other. Stumpy Robert Newhouse was the workhorse with 209 carries for 930 yards and a 4.4 average. Preston Pearson, picked up as a free agent and the star of the 37-7



NO. 12—ROGER STAUBACH

route of the Rams in the playoffs, was valuable as a runner and receiver. Doug Dennison was tough in short-yardage situations while Charlie Young was hampered by a foot injury. Scott Laidlaw, a rookie from Stanford, showed promise at times and Landry says he may have a power back in 6-4, 226-pound Jim Jensen of Iowa, a second-round pick. And Duane Thomas, the silent one, is back. A world traveler and sometimes running back, he had his best previous year with the Cowboys.

"Our offensive line has been our strength for years and still is," says Landry. The Cowboys traded the injured Niland but Burton Lawless, a rookie, filled in solidly at guard to complement Blaine Nye. Rayfield Wright, that airplane carrier of an offensive tackle, played injured in '75 but still made All Pro. Ralph Neely, the other tackle, is still performing competently into his 12th season and John Fitzgerald is a fixture at center. The Pokes have solid reserves in Bruce Walton, Pat Donovan, Kyle Davis and Herbert Scott plus two high draft choices Jim Eidson of Mississippi State and Tom Rafferty of Penn State.

There isn't a better clutch receiver in football than Drew Pearson, who stole a playoff game from Minnesota in the final seconds. Golden Richards has deep speed as the other wide receiver. Pearson caught 46 passes for 822 yards and eight touchdowns in '75; Richards held onto 27 passes, Newhouse caught 34, and tight end Jean Fugett caught 38. But Fugett, one of the league's best young tight ends, has gone over to the enemy. He played out his option and signed with George Al-

len's Washington Redskins. So Billy Joe DuPree, another good youngster, inherits the tight end position.

DEFENSE

The Cowboys may have the best front four in the NFC in young Ed (Too Tall) Jones and Harvey Martin, the aggressive ends; the veteran Jethro Pugh at left tackle and Larry Cole and Bill Gregory alternating at right tackle. But it's basically a five-man unit and Landry could have a depth problem unless somebody surfaces in training camp. As usual, the Cowboys were highly ranked defensively in '75, finishing third in the NFC in rushing and pass defense.

Lee Roy Jordan in the middle and Dave Edwards on the left wing are 35 and 36 years old, respectively, and Landry doesn't expect them to be proficient linebackers for all 14 league games. So he's got to develop replacements, namely Randy White, the No. 1 choice from Maryland last year (for Jordan) and Bob Breunig (for Edwards). D.D. Lewis and Tom Henderson make up a strong right side.

Landry says the secondary is his most competitive defensive position with Aaron Kyle, the No. 1 draft choice from Wyoming, and Randy Hughes and Benny Barnes challenging the incumbents: cornerbacks Mark Washington and Mel Renfro and strong safety Charlie Waters. Cliff Harris is an All Pro-type free safety. Renfro, 34, is thinking about retirement which could open up a position for one of the talented newcomers.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Landry isn't completely satisfied with his kicking game. Placekicker Toni Fritsch (22 of 35 field goals) was shaky at times and punter Mitch Hoopes (39.4 average) also was erratic. Golden Richards doubles as a punt runner and he's a good one with a 10.3 average, while the versatile Preston Pearson averaged 24.0 yards on 16 kickoff returns and Doug Dennison was 20.2 for 13 returns.

1975 Season Results

DALLAS (10-4)		
18	*Los Angeles	7
37	*St. Louis	31
36	Detroit	10
13	N.Y. Giants	7
17	*Green Bay	19
20	Philadelphia	17
24	Washington	30
31	*Kansas City	34
34	New England	31
27	*Philadelphia	17
14	*N.Y. Giants	3
17	St. Louis	31
31	*Washington	10
31	N.Y. Jets	21

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

St. Louis Cardinals

HEAD COACH: DON CORYELL

If you're a Cardinal fan, you get your money's worth: big play offense, Terry Metcalf, lots of points, last-second victories and a wild, merry-go-round ride into the playoffs.

But that's where you get off. Don Coryell's two-time Eastern Division champions have been bumped out of the post-season tournament in the opening round the past two years by Minnesota and Los Angeles.

And some theorize that the Cardinals' flamboyant, exciting offense can only take them so far and that the defense, exceedingly mediocre for a team that has won 21 of 28 games the last two regular seasons, must be upgraded.

Coryell is working toward this end, and although he made tackle Mike Dawson of Arizona his No. 1 choice and traded for veteran defensive players Walt Patulski, Marvin Upshaw, Rodrigo Barnes and Mike Sensibaugh, it's doubtful that the turnaround can be effected in one season.

For one thing, Coryell didn't have to give up too much for the veterans he acquired, promoting the notion that their best years aren't ahead of them.

Anyway, it's still more fun to be a Cardinal fan than a follower of some of those other NFL winners with their dull, ball control offenses and—oh, yes—very strong defenses.

OFFENSE

Coryell has an offense that is the envy of the league. The Big Red can strike quickly—15 touchdowns were scored from 35 yards out or farther last year—or grind it out as evidenced by 2402 rushing yards, the most in the club's 16-year tenure in St. Louis. Moreover, St. Louis' 5.4-yard average per offensive play led the NFC and 7.03 average per passing play topped the league.

Quarterback Jim Hart, once considered a marginal journeyman under other St. Louis coaches, has proven to be more than an adequate quarterback under Coryell. The 10-year veteran has all the club passing records now and threw 19 touchdown passes in the Cards' big play offense. Alas, he was intercepted 19 times not including two damaging thefts—both for touchdowns—in the Ram playoff game.

Excepting Buffalo's O.J. Simpson, no running back in the NFL is more exciting than Terry Metcalf, who set an NFL record in 1975 for combined yards: rushing, 816; receiving, 43 for 378; punt returns, 285 yards and a NFC high average of 12.4; kickoffs, 960 yards. He also ran 23 yards with a recovered fumble and threw a 51-yard touchdown pass to Mel Gray. Metcalf is a daring-type runner and his running mate, Jim Otis, supplies the power—like 1076 yards, a 4.0 average, and the NFC ground gaining title. Steve Jones and Jerry Latin are capable backups.



NO. 35—JIM OTIS

Efficient offensive lines have always been a Cardinal trademark and that tradition has been sustained by All-Pro tackle Dan Dierdorf, Pro-Bowlers Tom Banks, center, and Conrad Dobler, right guard. On the left side are underrated tackle Roger Finnie and guard Bob Young. The offense starts here and the Card blockers led the league for the second straight year in fewest quarterback sacks—only eight to tie an NFL record.

Gray, a 9.2 sprinter, matured last season as receiver, catching 48 for 926 yards and 11 touchdowns—career highs. His yardage was an NFC high and he tied Pittsburgh's Lynn Swann for touchdown receptions. The other wide receiver, Ike Harris, was technically a rookie after a short lived but outstanding career in the WFL. Harris caught 15 passes for a 17.0-yard average. He replaced Earl Thomas, who had a disappointing season and was traded to the Packers for an undisclosed draft choice. Jackie Smith, the veteran tight end, is in the twilight of his illustrious career and he teamed last year with J.V. Cain. They caught 25 passes in tandem.

DEFENSE

The Cardinals' offense was good enough to carry them to a 11-3 record in

regular season play but was permissive, allowing an average of 328 yards and a nearly 20 points per game. In the Ram playoff game, Lawrence McCutcheon ripped through the Big Red defenses for 202 yards. Coryell is trying to repair the defensive line by drafting 6-4, 270-pound Mike Dawson of Arizona and by sending Buffalo a second-round draft choice for 6-6, 265-pound defensive end Walt Patulski. He also got 6-4, 260-pound tackle Marvin Upshaw and safety Mike Sensibaugh from Kansas City in exchange for defensive back Tim Gray.

Returnees on a so-so front four are end Bob Bell, Charlie Davis, Bob Rowe, Ron Yankowski and reserve Leo Brooks. As for linebackers, Coryell can only hope that Larry Stallings, now in his 14th year, can hold up at one outside spot to complement Pete Barnes, a 10-year vet. Mike Arneson and Greg Hartle are the youngsters in the middle although Arneson may be moved outside. Rodrigo Barnes, Steve Neils and Ray White are the depth.

On a mediocre defensive unit, cornerbacks Roger Wehrli, an All Pro, and Norm Thompson are standouts. Thompson intercepted seven passes in 1975, Wehrli six. Ken Reaves, a strong safety, and Clarence Duren, a free safety, face position fights from ex-Chief Sensibaugh and Jeff Severson, obtained from Denver for a draft choice. Jim Tolbert is a back up at all four positions.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Jim Bakken, now 34 and in his 15th season, seems to get better with age. The veteran placekicker made 19 of 24 field goals in 1975 for a club record .792 percentage and 40 of 41 PATS for a total of 97 points. He kicked last-second field goals to beat Atlanta, Philadelphia and Washington. Jeff West hit six coffin corner punts as a rookie but averaged only 37.7 yards. There wasn't a better punt runner in the NFC than Metcalf, who was No. 2 (27.4-yard average) in the conference in kickoff returns.

1975 Season Results

ST. LOUIS (11-3)

23	*Atlanta	20
31	Dallas	37
26	*N.Y. Giants	14
17	Washington	27
31	*Philadelphia	20
20	N.Y. Giants	13
24	*New England	17
24	Philadelphia	23
20	*Washington	17
37	N.Y. Jets	6
14	*Buffalo	32
31	*Dallas	17
34	Chicago	20
24	Detroit	13

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Washington Redskins

HEAD COACH: GEORGE ALLEN

Are the Redskins truly the Over the Hill Gang after failing to make the playoffs last year for the first time during George Allen's five-year tenure in Washington? Or, was the 8-6 record the result of injuries, a demanding schedule and three, emotion-draining overtime games?

For sure, the Redskins are a bit of an enigma this season. First, the negatives. Allen's defense, once one of the league's best, deteriorated the last part of the season. George claims it was because people were playing hurt.

Moreover, when the Redskins reported to training camp 23 of the 40 players were 30 years of age and older. This may not be significant because Allen is better than any other coach in the league in enticing a few more good years out of the oldsters.

From the positive side, Allen, never one to miss an opportunity, has taken advantage of a court decision rendering the Rozelle compensation rule illegal. So he signed three quality NFL players who played out their options: running backs Calvin Hill and John Riggins and tight end Jean Fugett. Hill, lately of the WFL but more renowned as a star with Dallas and Riggins, formerly with the N.Y. Jets, are both big backs with speed and 1000-yard credentials. Fugett is a fine, young tight end.

Allen also raided the disbanded WFL ranks, signing 24 ex-Wiffles and he'll probably come up with a player or two out of the lot. As usual, the Redskins didn't have any high draft choices, not selecting until the fifth round.

But Allen tapped Mike Thomas on the fifth round last year out of Nevada-Las Vegas and all Thomas did was rush for 919 yards, catch 40 passes and become the consensus Rookie of the Year.

The Redskins don't look as menacing as they once did, especially defensively, but Allen always finds a way to keep his team in contention.

OFFENSE

The Redskins were the NFC's best passing team in 1975 as Billy Kilmer had a fine year but the running game, despite a lift from Thomas, was only average in a running-oriented league.

Larry Brown was moved to fullback and he made a contribution on his aching knees but he's not the Brown of a few years ago. So it would seem that Hill, and Riggins give the running game a new dimension—if Hill has completely recovered from knee surgery, a memento of his brief stay with Hawaii of the WFL. Allen proudly says he has the best running backs he has ever coached in his 11-year NFL career.

Perhaps people are getting the idea now that Kilmer is something more than a journeyman quarterback. Even though he



NO. 17—BILL KILMER

missed some games due to shoulder and foot injuries, the 37-year-old, 15-year veteran threw 23 touchdown passes and was the third-ranked passer in the conference behind Fran Tarkenton and Roger Staubach. Not bad company. Allen has experienced back-up help in Randy Johnson and Joe Theismann.

The offensive line was a patchwork unit in '75 with several players injured. Still, it performed commendably. But there's a depth problem there now with the retirement of Ray Schoenke, who has played creditably over the years when asked to replace an injured player—like last year when he took over for guard Paul Laaveg. Walt Sweeney, the other guard, is coming off knee surgery as is tackle Tim Stokes. Terry Hermerling, making a comeback from two knee operations, adequately replaced Stokes while tackle George Starke had a good season.

Len Hauss is a fixture at center while the reserves include Bob Kuziel, Jim Arneson and guard Mike Hughes of Baylor, the Redskins' first draft choice on the fifth round.

As usual, Allen has a stylish stable of receivers led by Charley Taylor, who became the all-time NFL reception leader last year by catching 53 passes for a 12-year total of 635. Frank Grant, who took over for Roy Jefferson in the sixth game, was a big play threat down the stretch. He caught 41 passes for 776 yards and eight touchdowns. Jefferson had knee surgery and might not regain his job. Larry Jones, the exciting kick runner, provides some depth on the outside. The Redskins have the best tight end depth in the league with Jerry Smith, who has caught more TD passes (58) than any other tight end in NFL history; Alvin Reed, a strong blocker, and Fugett, who caught 38 passes for 488 yards for the Cowboys in '75.

DEFENSE

It must be embarrassing to the defense-minded Allen that his defense ranked seventh (even behind New Orleans) in the NFC last year. It seemed that the entire

unit was a step slower in '75. For sure, the front four—once Allen's pride—wasn't as intimidating. A pre-season knee injury to Verlon Biggs forced Allen to switch Dennis Johnson from tackle to end and he brought some speed to the position. Ron McDole, now in his 16th season, was fairly consistent at the other wing. Diron Talbert, the tough tackle, wasn't the same in '75 after knee surgery but apparently has recuperated. Bill Brundige is coming off both shoulder and foot surgery at the other tackle which means that Manny Sistrunk, who filled in there last year, might have to do it again. Dave Butz is a swingman in reserve.

As long as Chris Hanburger is healthy, Redskin linebacking at least will be respectable. He's the smart, defensive quarterback on the left side with Brad Dusek, replacing retired Dave Robinson on the right. Harold McLinton is back in the middle but Rusty Tillman has proved that he can do the job when subbing previously for McLinton. Pete Wysocki, a special teams man, may see more service and, perhaps, Steve Manstedt of the WFL.

The pass defense wasn't much in '75 with opponents completing 55.8% of their passes for a 174 yard a game average. The front four, with an inconsistent pass rush, put pressure on cornerback Pat Fischer, the 5-9, 170-pound battler coming back for his 16th season; corner Mike Bass, who played injured; weak safety Bryant Salter and strong safety Ken Houston, one of the best. Salter played both corner and safety last year and will contest Brig Owens for the safety position. Eddie Brown moves in when Allen uses his nickel defense.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Mike Bragg had nine punts that died inside the 10-yard line while averaging 40.6 yards. Mark Moseley had his shaky moments as a placekicker, making 16 of 25. Jones averaged 7.7 and 23.1 as a punt and kickoff runner. Overall, special teams, another Allen specialty, could be better. 🐾

1975 Season Results

WASHINGTON (8-6)

41	*New Orleans	3
49	*N.Y. Giants	13
10	Philadelphia	26
27	*St. Louis	17
10	Houston	13
23	Cleveland	7
30	*Dallas	24
21	N.Y. Giants	13
17	St. Louis	20
23	*Oakland	26
31	*Minnesota	30
30	Atlanta	27
10	Dallas	31
3	*Philadelphia	26

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

New York Giants

HEAD COACH: BILL ARNSPARGER

It was third and 20 for the Giants last spring when a computer unloaded the most arduous schedule in the league on Bill Arnsparger's team. (See page 66.)

It's tough enough that the Giants are in the NFC East with the likes of the Cowboys, Redskins and Cardinals. They also are required to confront seven playoff teams including a five-week gauntlet of the Rams, Cards, Cowboys, Vikings and Steelers.

Nevertheless, Arnsparger is optimistic that he can improve on his team's 5-9 record in 1975. This optimism is based on a tangible and an intangible.

The tangible is the presence of Larry Csonka, the former great Miami fullback, who signed on with the Giants for untold riches after one disappointing, injury-slowng season with Memphis of the WFL.

The intangible is the expected morale-lifting effect of playing in a new, 76,500-seat stadium across the Hudson—the old club's first home of their own in their 51-year association with the NFL.

Arnsparger had a young starting team—from an experience average—last year, and reasons that it can only improve into what he calls a "growing contender."

The Giants had 23 first- and second-year players on their roster in '75 and 10 sophomores were starters. And that 5-9 record wasn't so bad when you consider that four of the nine losses were inflicted by eight points or less.

Yes, the Giants could improve if the schedule doesn't kill them off.

OFFENSE

The Giants ranked only 10th in total offense in the NFC last year, mainly due to the lack of an intimidating running game. Csonka, only 29, could change all that. He couldn't help Memphis because of a nagging (not serious) stomach injury, but the Giants remember the Zerk from Miami days when the 6-3, 235 pounder rushed for 5900 yards in seven seasons.

New York has the big back it needs now and he'll be complemented by Joe Dawkins, the club's leading rusher last season with a modest 438 yards; Doug Kotar, Marsh White, Larry Watkins and rookie Gordon Bell of Michigan. Ron Johnson, the once-great Giant runner, has played out his option and may not return. For sure, Csonka, if healthy, should escalate that 116.2 average per game rushing statistic of '75.

Quarterback Craig Morton could be more of a factor with an improved running game. As it was, Morton, now 33 and probably in his prime, didn't do badly. He completed 51.2% of his passes for 2359 yards and 11 touchdowns in '75. Carl Summerell and Mike Wells are the young backups.

Three second-year pros—John Hicks,



NO. 15—CRAIG MORTON

Tom Mullen and Karl Chandler—started in the offensive line last season—and Arnsparger figures that their expected maturity, plus some holdover experience and the addition of four starters from Csonka's Memphis club can only be a plus for the Giants.

Depth was a problem here last season and it's apparently corrected. The veteran incumbents are center Bob Hyland and tackles Doug Van Horn and Willie Young. The youngsters include Hicks and Mullen, who made the All-Rookie team in '74; Chandler and Al Simpson and the former Wiffles—center Ralph Hill, guards Charlie Bray and Tom Kruger, and tackle Mike Gibbons.

The Giants had a "long" and "short" passing game last year as 6-5 Walker Gillette led the club with 43 catches for 600 yards and 5-11 Ray Rhodes grabbed 26 for 537 yards, a 20.7 average and 6 touchdowns. Other outside receivers are Danny Buggs and Elmo Wright, a former No. 1 choice of the Kansas City Chiefs. Tight end Bob Tucker is a former All Pro who caught 34 passes for 484 yards and he has a solid backup in Jim Obradovich, who had a touchdown among his seven receptions.

DEFENSE

New York was the easiest team to run on in the NFC with the opposition averaging 173 yards a game and 4.4 yards a carry. Part of the problem was that Arnsparger, because of injuries, was unable to start the same front four for three consecutive games.

This disturbing trend began in the first quarter of the first game when tackle John

Mendenhall, a fine young pro, went down with an ankle injury. End Dave Gallagher, another young Turk, was also injured after some exemplary games. They'll be back to team with veteran end Jack Gregory, who had 16 sacks; young tackles Rick Dvorak and Jim Pietrzak, end George Martin and 6-4, 245-pound Troy Archer, the No. 1 choice from Colorado.

The Giants have a linebacker-oriented defense under Arnsparger and it's an improving, young unit featuring Pat Hughes on the weak side, Brian Kelley in the middle and 6-5 Brad Van Pelt on the strong side. Van Pelt could be another Ted (Mad Stork) Hendricks. Top prospect is rookie Harry Carson of South Carolina State, a No. 3.

Two young pros, Bobby Brooks at right corner and Clyde Powers at strong safety, became starters for the first time last season and showed some potential. Jim Steinke, now in his fourth season, filled in at corner and free safety as Henry Stuckey, the left cornerback, missed 10 games after knee surgery. Stuckey's expected return should upgrade a secondary that intercepted only 16 passes in '75. Veteran safety Spider Lockhart, still a hitter in his 12th season, also is available. Robert Gilbin, a second-year pro, will get an extensive tryout at strong safety with Powers possibly moving to the weak side.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Punter Dave Jennings averaged 40.9 yards on 76 punts last season and, more importantly, achieved the excellent "hang time" that coaches prattle on about. The Giants weren't within George Hunt's field goal range too often as he only attempted 11, made 6 and had 3 blocked. But he did beat Buffalo on Monday night TV on a 37-yarder with five seconds left. Rony Colbert, who shared kickoff return duties with Buggs and Kotar, has been lost to Seattle in the expansion draft. He was also the Giants' leading punt runner with an 8.8 average. Buggs apparently is his replacement.

1975 Season Results

NEW YORK GIANTS (5-9)

23	Philadelphia	14
13	Washington	49
14	St. Louis	26
7	*Dallas	13
17	Buffalo	14
13	*St. Louis	20
35	*San Diego	24
13	*Washington	21
10	*Philadelphia	13
14	Green Bay	40
3	Dallas	14
0	*Baltimore	21
28	*New Orleans	14
26	San Francisco	23

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—EASTERN DIVISION

Philadelphia Eagles

HEAD COACH: DICK VERMEIL

Dick Vermeil will be Philadelphia's fifth head coach in nine years and that should tell you something about the Eagles. No one seems able to get them to fly right, on the football field.

Mike McCormack tried, reaching 7-7 respectability in 1974 (the Eagles haven't had a winning season since 1966) but when the club slumped to 4-10 last year he was out and Vermeil was the surprise replacement.

Vermeil was a surprise in the sense that he isn't nationally known; had been a head coach for only two years—at UCLA—and despite denials by owner Leonard Tose, Vermeil only got the job after it was turned down by Ara Parseghian, Frank Kush and others.

Vermeil wasn't anxious to leave UCLA. His program was just getting under way, climaxed by the stunning, 23-10 upset of Ohio State in the Rose Bowl. But the Eagles offered him a five-year, \$1 million plus contract he couldn't refuse.

Anyway, the Eagles may have bought an eventual winner. Vermeil, 39, is hard working, enthusiastic and a good administrator. He carefully has planned his career to work under the best of coaches at the collegiate and pro level—John Ralston, Tommy Prothro, George Allen and Chuck Knox.

The Eagles, unlike some other NFL losers, aren't without talent. Players like Charles Young, Mike Boryla, Harold Carmichael, Jerry Sisemore, Bill Bergey and Bill Bradley aren't journeymen.

But the Eagles don't always play to their potential and there were some morale problems under the personable McCormack, who might have been too nice a guy.

Vermeil, with the Pepsodent smile, is a tough nice guy. But he isn't even sure he can turn the Eagles around. Still, no one will try harder.

OFFENSE

Vermeil must find a way to revitalize the Eagles' sorry running game while retaining the best elements of a once flourishing passing attack. First, he must settle on a starting quarterback. Boryla and Roman Gabriel have shared the position the past two years with only moderate success. Gabe's 14-year career is at the crossroads. He has played out his option, had knee surgery for the umpteenth time and might call it quits or move on. However, Vermeil worked compatibly with Gabriel when he was the quarterback coach with the Rams and could inspire the sometimes moody veteran. Boryla, starting his third NFL season, has shown flashes of brilliance as evidenced by his MVP performance in the last Pro Bowl game.

Both quarterbacks would benefit from a better running game. The Eagles could generate only 1,702 rushing yards last



NO. 66—BILL BERGEY

season and just three touchdowns on the ground. Reliable Tom Sullivan was the team's best rusher (again), accounting for 632 yards. Art Malone had some good seasons in Atlanta before being slowed by injuries. James McAlister, the former Bruin, has some potential and Po James is still around. But there isn't much rookie help because the Eagles didn't start drafting until the fourth round.

Vermeil can only hope that the experience gained playing as a unit last season will benefit Jerry Sisemore and Stan Walters, good young tackles; former All-Pro guard John Niland from Dallas and guard Bill Lueck and center Guy Morriss. Lueck missed the last three games after knee surgery while a former starter, Wade Key, broke his arm and played in only two games. Tom Luken also played extensively. Dennis Nelson, a former starter at Baltimore, figures and, possibly, Kirk Johnson, a 6-5, 277-pound rookie (No. 6) from Howard Payne. Boryla and Gabriel were sacked 30 times in '75, so this unit is hardly first rate.

For pure talent, the Eagles' receivers rank with any group in the league. But they haven't always played to their potential, sometimes dropping passes they should catch. Towering Harold Carmichael, on the outside, and tight end Charlie Young each caught 49 passes in '75, while the third starter, Charles Smith, emerged as a long distance threat with 37 catches for 515 yards. Young says he's the league's best tight end but has yet to prove it on consistency.

DEFENSE

A parade of coaches have tried to up-

grade the Eagles' defense and have failed. It was porous again last year, ranking 11th overall in the NFC. Moreover, the front four and backers could account for only 17 sacks, a league low.

Vermeil doesn't mince words when he talks about the defensive line: "It could very well be the weakest area of our team. It is inexperienced and not as talented as we would like." Tackle Bill Dunstan was the most consistent rusher while end Will Wynn showed some promise. Blenda Gay and Rich Glover, regulars in '75, face possible competition from four draftees: Mike Smith of Florida (4), Greg Johnson of Florida State (5), Carl Hairston of Maryland State (7) and Mike Gilbert of San Diego State (11).

Middle backer Bill Bergey is All-Pro caliber but 1975 wasn't his best year. However, this is still the Eagles' strong point on defense. John Bunting is a steady veteran on the right side, while young Frank LeMaster intercepted four passes in '75 including one for an 89-yard touchdown. Dean Halverson is a top reserve while Vermeil may have a sleeper from his UCLA team: 13th round draft choice Terry Tautolo, a hard worker.

For the most part, the secondary performed adequately in 1975. The versatile Bradley, the free safety, got off to a fast start with five interceptions but then was injured. Randy Logan is a fine strong safety. Johnny Outlaw and Joe Lavender are improving cornermen while second-year pro Artimus Parker intercepted four passes as a reserve safety.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Regular punter Spike Jones averaged 40.4 yards last season but he may be challenged by another Vermeil protege, ex-Bruin Brett White, who averaged 44 yards on 7 punts as a collegian. Horst Muhlmann was the NFC's fourth-rated field goal kicker, making 20 of 29. Larry Marshall averaged 25.2 and 10.2 in kickoff and punt returns, while Bill Bradley is available as a punter, return specialist and holder.

1975 Season Results

PHILADELPHIA (4-10)

14	*N.Y. Giants	23
13	Chicago	15
26	*Washington	10
16	Miami	24
20	St. Louis	31
17	*Dallas	20
3	*Los Angeles	42
23	*St. Louis	24
13	N.Y. Giants	10
17	Dallas	27
27	*San Francisco	17
0	*Cincinnati	31
10	Denver	25
26	Washington	3

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Minnesota Vikings

HEAD COACH: BUD GRANT

In Bud Grant's view a lot of good things happened to the Minnesota Vikings in 1975. No, they didn't make a third straight appearance in the Super Bowl. They got knocked out of the playoffs in the opening round by Dallas.

Knocked isn't the proper word. Stunned is more like it. A final second's, desperation bomb by Roger Staubach—a seemingly impossible catch by Drew Pearson under tight coverage—a season suddenly over.

People will remember that. But Grant takes the long view, citing a 12-2 record including those 10 straight victories from the start of the season.

"Maybe that's taken for granted around here, since we've had such good records in the past," Grant noted.

Grant is probably right. The Vikings have anesthetized their fans with an iron control of the Central Division and their metro-nome efficiency. The 12-2 record was the fourth such performance for the Vikings in the past seven years.

The club is neither too old nor too young. Quarterback Fran Tarkenton, the indestructible one, will keep marching to the Hall of Fame improving on his records in the process.

Oh, there's a problem at wide receiver because John Gilliam played out his option and signed with Atlanta. But Grant has gone through that before when Gilliam defected to the WFL in 1974. He adjusted and he will again.

As for 1976, look for 12-2 or something close to it.

OFFENSE

"Tarkenton most likely will go down as the greatest quarterback ever to play pro football," says Grant. "That's the type of honor usually arrived at after a player is through." And Grant says that Francis is far from through. After years of being dismissed as just a scrambler, as a quarterback with only a fair arm, he is finally being recognized for what he is: one of the best the game has ever produced. This was brought home last year when the 36-year-old Tarkenton broke Johnny Unitas' all-time records for pass completions, attempts and touchdown passes. This was accomplished in a season in which he was named Player of the Year by many publications; and completed 64% of his passes for 25 touchdowns and 2994 yards. *Frantic*. Because Tarkenton is rarely injured, no one sees much of two experienced back-up quarterbacks, Bob Berry and Bob Lee.

If Tarkenton weren't Player of the Year, then multi-talented running back Chuck Foreman would be a likely prospect. His credentials: 73 receptions, best in the NFL; 1070 rushing yards, second in the NFC; and 22 touchdowns. A super season for Foreman and a season in which Ed Mari-



NO. 44—CHUCK FOREMAN

naro began to play to expectations. Grant says he ran hard and blocked well. Brent McClanahan was an exciting spot runner and old pro Dave Osborn was available when experience was needed. Other runners include Robert Miller, Willie Spencer from the WFL, and Keith Barnette, a No. 5 pick from Boston College. Spencer, Grant said, is a big back with skills similar to Jim Braxton of Buffalo.

The Vikings have one of the league's best offensive lines, a blend of experience and skill. Ron Yary is an All-Pro tackle, Ed White is an All-Pro-type guard, center Mick Tingelhoff might be the Vikings' most valuable player and tackle Steve Riley is a future All-Pro. Andy Maurer played well at guard at times and Steve Lawson was a competent backup. Grant has brought in some back-up help for Tingelhoff, a 13-year pro. Doug Dumler was acquired from New England and Wes Hamilton, a No. 3 choice from Tulsa, can play guard and center. Charles Goodrum has been a starter and Scott Anderson is a prospect among the blockers. A very good situation.

Gilliam will be missed. He takes 50 catches, 777 yards and 7 touchdowns with him to Atlanta. Moreover, he was Tarkenton's favorite receiver, a bomb threat who kept defenses honest. His departure means that reliable Jim Lash, who caught 37 passes in '75, will have more responsibilities. Otherwise, returning reserves, free agents and some draft choices—like Sammie White, the No. 2 pick from Grambling—will have to fill in at the other wide receiver spot. There's more stability at tight end with Stu Voigt, a big play guy, and Steve Craig and Doug Kingsriter, out with a knee injury in '75.

DEFENSE

The Vikings led the NFC in both rushing

and pass defense last season and there's no reason to think that Grant won't have another robust defense again. The famed Purple Gang is still intact: the remarkable Jim Marshall, now in his 17th season; All-Pro Alan Page, steady Carl Eller and Doug Sutherland, the youngster of the group with only six years experience. Mark Mulaney is a consistent-playing reserve as is Bob Lurtsema. Jim White, the No. 1 choice from Oklahoma State, could be a future star.

The Vikings didn't draft any linebackers because Roy Winston and young Fred McNeill have the position secured on the left side; Wally Hilgenberg and Matt Blair are fixtures on the right and Jeff Siemon, a Pro Bowler, and Amos Martin, injured in '75 but healthy now, are fine middle back-

ers. Grant has a sound secondary if everyone is sound. Cornerback Bobby Bryant, who has been injured off and on, stayed in the lineup last year and had a good season. But strong safety Jeff Wright went down with a knee injury and Terry Brown moved in to become the club's No. 2 tackler. Nate Wright was a dependable cornerback even though he didn't have any interceptions, and Drew Pearson caught what the Vikings call a "fluke" pass over him in the Dallas game. Free safety Paul Krause, an All-Pro, had an outstanding year with 10 interceptions. The Vikes may have helped themselves in the draft with Steve Wagner of Wisconsin and Larry Brune of Rice.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Placekickers are an unreliable lot, so that makes 37-year-old Fred Cox something special. He kicked for distance in '75—52 and 46 yards to beat Chicago—and didn't miss from inside the 40. Neil Clabo averaged 41.1 yards as a rookie punter last season, and appears to have a long career. Grant is pleased with his kick coverage but needs some return men to make things happen. Prospects are Isaac Hagins, Terry Egerdahl, Fred Willis and Sammie White—all rookies.

1975 Season Results

MINNESOTA (12-2)

27	*San Francisco	17
42	Cleveland	10
28	*Chicago	3
29	*N.Y. Jets	21
25	*Detroit	19
13	Chicago	9
28	Green Bay	17
38	*Atlanta	0
20	New Orleans	7
28	*San Diego	13
30	Washington	31
24	*Green Bay	3
10	Detroit	17
35	Buffalo	13

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Detroit Lions

HEAD COACH: RICK FORZANO

Considering that only 10 players were able to start every game last season, that there were a total of 13 operations; that Greg Landry and Bill Munson, the veteran co-No. 1 quarterbacks went down and out for the season in the sixth game, the Lions' 7-7 record was an achievement, indeed.

The Lions are hung up on the number 7. They've finished second seven straight times in the Central Division and have had 7-7 records the past two seasons.

Enough, cries coach Rick Forzano, now in his third season as head coach. "We will win the division in the next two years and we'll be an exciting, entertaining and enthusiastic team, too."

Bold words? Not necessarily. The Lions are almost there. The defense improved dramatically from 12th to fourth best in the NFC; the running game was also fourth ranked. Only the passing game fell off.

But that was to be expected with country folk singer Joe Reed, a better runner than a passer, coming on to start the final eight games.

The Lions also figure they benefited by the draft, getting two picks in each of the first three rounds. And they helped themselves to a little bit of this and that: defensive back James Hunter (Grambling) and running back Lawrence Gaines (Wyoming), round 1; guard Ken Long (Purdue) and tight end David Hill (Texas A & I), round 2; and tackle Russ Bolinger (Long Beach State) and defensive tackle John Woodcock (Hawaii), round 3.

But are the Lions ready to challenge Minnesota, the perennial division champion? Forzano thinks so, citing two wins over the Vikings in the past three games.

OFFENSE

In an injury-hexed season, the offense suffered the worst with only four players able to start in every game. Knee injuries took care of Munson and Landry, while six different men started at wide receiver. Munson, in his 13th season, and Landry, in his 9th, will continue their long-time fight for the starting job, with Reed, a good competitor, available if either is injured again.

The running game showed considerable improvement in '75 with second-year pro Dexter Bussey coming on to gain 696 yards. Altie Taylor, Detroit's all-time rushing leader, contributed 638. But, because he wasn't used on every down, he has said he wouldn't mind being traded. It's doubtful if his wish is granted. Other rushers who contributed were newcomers Bobby Thompson (268 yards) and Horace King (260). Steve Owens—he of the scarred knees—was sidelined the entire season. Gaines, a co-first round pick, may provide the Lions with even more running



NO. 20—LEM BARNEY

depth. He reportedly has 4.7 speed on a 6-1, 240-pound frame.

The Lions were a better ball control team last season with 18 of the offense's 25 touchdowns resulting from drives of 50 yards or longer. Offensive line, take a bow. This unit has two of the game's best tackles, Rockne Freitas and Jim Yarbrough, both 6-6 and 260. Right guard Bob Kowalkowski, now in his 10th season, started every game for the fourth straight year. Lynn Boden, Detroit's first pick in the '75 draft, became a starter at left guard in the third game and held it to make the All-Rookie team. Jon Morris, the former Patriot, excelled at center, said Forzano, in his first year with the Lions and his 11th in the league.

There's good depth in swingman Guy Dennis, Craig Hertwig and, possibly, two rookies, Long and Bolinger.

The attrition rate was highest at wide receiver as Larry Walton went down in the final pre-season game; rookie Dennis Franklin started two regular season games before he went out; Jon Staggers was claimed from Green Bay and lasted four games with free agent Marlin Briscoe finishing up and catching four touchdown passes in the final three games. Ray Jarvis stayed healthy on the other side and caught 29 passes for four touchdowns. Charlie Sanders, the steady All-Pro tight end, played injured but still led the club with 37 catches and blocked to his usual high standard.

DEFENSE

Forzano says the defense will be even better than it was in 1975 because of a new concept that permits the players to be more aggressive. The improvement was shown statistically from '74: 35 fewer first downs, 338 less total yards and 14 more quarterback sacks.

Forzano shuffled his front four with veteran Larry Hand, top sacker with seven, sliding from end to tackle alongside Herb Orvis with second-year pro Billy Howard moving in at one wing and Ken Sanders

the other. Orvis is ready for an All Pro push. Ready reserves are Doug English, Jim Mitchell, Ernie Price and Woodcock, the rookie.

Good linebacking was once a Detroit staple and it's getting that way again. Outside backer Paul Naumoff was the Lions' defensive MVP with a team-leading average of 10 tackles a game. On the other side, Charlie Weaver got off to a fine start until slowed by an ankle injury and being replaced by Ed O'Neil. O'Neil also worked inside next to regular middle backer Jim Laslavic when Forzano used four backers.

Laslavic, starting his third year as a signal caller, is beginning to play in the mold of former great Detroit middlemen, Mike Lucci and Joe Schmidt.

Veteran cornerback Lem Barney made a strong comeback from personal problems to intercept five passes and go to the Pro Bowl. He was flanked by Levi Johnson with Ben Davis in reserve. Charlie West, the former Viking, was the best strong safety in the league, according to Forzano, while versatile Dick Jauron was the free safety. He still can be a starter unless rookie James Hunter, the Grambling All-American of 4.4 speed, asserts himself. If so, this would free Jauron to display his offensive talent at running back or wide receiver.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Hunter is also an exciting punt running prospect, who was frustrated by having four touchdown returns called back by penalty his senior year. Veteran return specialists are West, Barney and Jauron for punts and the two Thompsons, Bobby and Leonard, for kickoffs. Bobby's 25.7 average ranked third in the NFC.

Punting again is the old favorite Herman (Thunderfoot) Weaver, whose 42.0 average paced the NFC and got him into the Pro Bowl. As usual, Errol Mann will be challenged by soccer-styled sidewinders but he'll probably prevail. His kickoffs don't reach the end zone but his clutch field goals (14 of 21) win games.

1975 Season Results

DETROIT (7-7)		
30	Green Bay	16
17	Atlanta	14
10	*Dallas	36
27	*Chicago	7
19	Minnesota	25
8	Houston	24
28	San Francisco	17
21	*Cleveland	10
13	*Green Bay	10
21	Kansas City	24
0	Los Angeles	20
21	Chicago	25
17	*Minnesota	10
13	*St. Louis	24

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Green Bay Packers

HEAD COACH: BART STARR

Bart Starr's name is magic in Green Bay. But the former great Packer quarterback from those longed-for-days of the Vince Lombardi era is not a magician.

The new Green Bay coach couldn't turn the Packers around in 1975. In fact, they regressed from a 6-8 record to 4-10.

What was wrong? A little of everything.

The offense, 11th ranked in the NFC and 13th in rushing, didn't scare anyone. John Brockington, the former All-Pro, the man of the automatic 1,000-yard seasons, could rush for only 434 yards. The offensive line was either too old, not good enough, or something.

Quarterback John Hadl, 36, obtained for a King's ransom from the Rams, couldn't get much going with such lack of support.

The defense had its holes, too. The Packers couldn't run against anybody, nor they could they stop any one running, ranking 12th in that department.

The linebacking was inconsistent and the secondary, once promising, faltered. As a team, the Pack could intercept only 14 passes.

The Pack probably won't be back this season, although Starr, in his first year as a head coach, probably learned a lot. He's not the type to make the same mistakes twice.

In desperate times you make bold moves, and Starr made one when he traded Hadl, cornerback Ken Ellis (who had played out his option), and a couple of draft choices to Houston to get Lynn Dickey, a 26-year-old quarterback whose career was in limbo while playing behind Dan Pastorini.

Knowing Starr and his determination, the Packers should be a little better this season but don't look for any miracles.

OFFENSE

Starr figures that Dickey, 10 years younger than Hadl, is the man to trust with his program. He has the size (6-4, 215) the pros covet and a strong arm. But it might be rusty through mis-use. He played only long enough last season to attempt four passes, completing two. Backing Dickey are much traveled Don Milan, Carlos Brown, a rookie last season from UOP, and free agent Steve Lainhart.

Unless Brockington regains his running form—and gets some help up front—the Packers are still hurting. Halfback Willard Harrell, only 5-8 and 180, seems more suited for spot duty. Fifth and 14th round draft choices like Aundra Thompson and John Henson don't usually turn teams around, nor do free agents such as Ken Grandberry, Howard Strickland and Cliff Taylor.

Other than quarterback, Starr has made the offensive line his first priority. He picked a lineman, Mark Koncar (6-4, 268) of Colorado, on the first round, as Green



NO. 13—CHESTER MARCOL

Bay did in 1975 with Bill Bain of USC. Starr has also talked guard Gale Gillingham out of a brief retirement. Last year's regulars, Ernie McMillan the ex-Cardinal; Dick Himes at tackle, Bruce Van Dyke and Pat Matson at guards, along with Larry McCarren or Bob McCaffrey at center, didn't get the job done. Others who may figure are guard Keith Wortman, ex-Falcons Steve Knutson—and, of course, Koncar and Bain.

Outside receiver Ken Payne came off a 1974 rookie season in which he caught only five passes to lead the Packers with 58 catches for 766 yards. Brockington (33) and Harrell (34) accounted for 67 receptions while tight end Rich McGeorge had 32. Despite a sluggish pass offense, the receiving corps is improving. Either fast Steve Odom or Gerald Tinker will be at the other outside spot with Payne.

DEFENSE

Starr had told his defensive linemen that they must do a better job of pass rushing and defending against the rush. What else is there? This improvement must come from the same gang—ends Clarence Williams and Alden Roche and tackles Mike McCoy and Dave Pureifory. McCoy has showed All-Pro potential but isn't consistent. Pureifory came on strong late in the season including five sacks in a game

against the Rams and 11 of the Pack's 32 for the season. Reserves who may play are ex-WFLers Dave Roller and Drew Taylor along with Steve Okoniewski, Bill Cooke, Paul Linfood and Chris Stecher.

Starr must get a good year out of Jim Carter, the middle backer who has been troubled by leg injuries, or the linebacking still will need to be repaired. Fred Carr had a fine year at one outside position, while Gary Weaver and Tom Toner must improve at the other wing. Returning reserves include Tom Hull and Ron Acks while a fourth round choice, Tony Perko (6-3, 233) of Pittsburgh, might see some playing time.

The Packers have lost two veteran defensive backs, Al Matthews (expansion draft) and Ken Ellis (trade), while cornerback Willie Buchanon is coming back from his second leg fracture in three years. So it will be a restructured secondary with Buchanon—if fit—at left corner; Perry Smith at right corner; Johnnie Gray, the team's leading tackler at free safety and Charley Hall, Matthews' replacement, at strong safety. Three rookies may be pressed into service—Mike Charles McCoy (No. 3) of Colorado, Jim Burrow (No. 8) of Nebraska and Brad Bowman (No. 13) of So. Mississippi.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Chester Marcol, who won two NFL scoring titles his first three years, returns after being inactive in 1975 with a torn thigh muscle. Another way to figure it is the return of 304 points. Packer punting could have been declared a disaster area in that embarrassing punt-blocking opener against Detroit. But it got better when ex-Oiler David Beverly (37.6) replaced Steve Broussard (31.1) in the fifth game. The punt coverage team held the opposition to an average of 4.9 yards per return, the best mark since the new NFL punt covering rule was adopted in 1974. Harrell averaged only 6.5 yards on 21 punt returns, while Odom traveled 1034 yards in kickoff returns including a 93-yard touchdown. 🏈

1975 Season Results

GREEN BAY (4-10)

16	*Detroit	30
13	Denver	23
7	*Miami	31
19	New Orleans	20
19	Dallas	17
13	*Pittsburgh	16
17	*Minnesota	28
14	Chicago	27
10	Detroit	13
40	*N.Y. Giants	14
28	*Chicago	7
3	Minnesota	24
5	Los Angeles	22
22	*Atlanta	13

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—CENTRAL DIVISION

Chicago Bears

HEAD COACH: JACK PARDEE

As to be expected the Chicago Bears suffered growing and transitional pains last season and a 4-10 record was the predictable outcome.

The Bears had a new coach, the youngest in the NFL in '75 39-year-old Jack Pardee, and a new general manager, Jim Finks, formerly with the Minnesota Vikings. The club was shook up to the extent that 17 rookies made the final 43-man roster. Moreover, the Bears made 16 trades, tying San Diego in the NFL for the most transactions.

The young Bears made a mild spurt at the end of the season, winning two of their last three games but they're still a long way away from challenging Minnesota, the perennial Central Division titlist. Even Finks admits that.

The Bears think they've found a quarterback in Bob Avellini, a rookie starter in the last four games. But they still need a proven tight end, and middle linebacker—something they haven't had since Mike Ditka and Dick Butkus departed—and also there are some holes in the secondary.

Chicago didn't appreciably help itself in these areas in the draft, so Pardee will have to make do with what he has or make some more trades.

The Bears might improve a bit in '76, but probably not enough to scare anyone. Even if they do, their schedule is a killer including out-of-division games with Washington, Los Angeles, Oakland, Dallas and Denver.

OFFENSE

Finks and Pardee were seriously considering trading for an established quarterback late last season until young Avellini asserted himself as a replacement for Gary Huff. He was mature for his inexperience, seemed mentally and physically tough, and moved reasonably well even though he couldn't be called quick footed.

Huff, a former backup to Bobby Douglass, still thinks he should be No. 1 and might be traded before the season starts. Virgil Carter, in his second tour of duty with the Bears, is there if Avellini falters.

The Bears weren't much of an offensive team in '76, ranking ahead of only New Orleans in the NFC. But Pardee has potentially two fine running backs in Walter Payton, the No. 1 pick in '75, and Roland Harper, who rushed for 1132 yards in tandem as rookies. Backing them up will be veterans Mike Adamle and Johnny Musso, young Tom Donchez and, perhaps, draftee Brian Baschnagel of Ohio State, who may wind up as a wide receiver or safety... if he has NFL speed.

The young offensive line showed some improvement late in the season and the Bears feel they've upgraded the position by making tackle Dennis Lick (6-3, 256) of Wisconsin their first draft choice. Pardee had three rookie starters up front last



NO. 35—ROLAND HARPER

year—guard Noah Jackson, center Dan Peiffer and tackle Jeff Sevy—and he could have four this season. Other holdovers are veteran guard Mark Nordquist and tackle Lionel Antoine, who started to come into his own last year in his fourth pro season.

Bo Rather was the Bears' leading receiver last year with 39 catches for 685 yards but Ron Shanklin is potentially the club's best pass catcher. The ex-Steeler missed the 1975 season because of knee surgery but is expected to be fit for '76. Veteran Bob Grim filled in for Shanklin, while Pardee has three tight ends to choose from, none of whom have distinguished themselves: Bob Parsons, Greg Latta and Gary Butler.

DEFENSE

Intimidating defense always has been a Bear staple but, excepting All-Pro tackle Wally Chambers and veteran linebacker Doug Buffone, there weren't too many intimidators last season.

Pardee, a former great linebacker himself, is desperately searching for a middle backer. Waymond Bryant played the position for a while last season but is better suited on the outside. Larry Ely was lost to Tampa Bay in the expansion draft which means that journeymen Carl Gersbach and Don Rives are possible starters. Buffone, in his 11th year, must stabilize this unsettled linebacking unit.

Pardee has a young and potentially fine defensive line with Chambers the catalyst. In his first All-Pro season he led the Bears with 14 sacks for 105 yards lost and in unassisted tackles with 80. Mike Hartenstein, who started all 14 games at defensive left end, and Roger Stillwell, a starter in 11 games at tackle, made the All-Rookie team. There's veteran support from tackle

Jim Osborne, Richard Harris and swing lineman Gary Hrivnak.

The secondary was small on size and numbers in '75 with only five—safeties Craig Clemons and Doug Plank, cornerbacks Allan Ellis and Virgil Livers and back-up Billy Knox—finishing the season.

So Finks looked for some help in the draft and took Baschnagel, UCLA All-American quarterback John Sciarra and Alabama's Wayne Rhodes in the third and fourth rounds. Sciarra, however, signed with the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian League.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Livers averaged an impressive 10.9 yards as a punt runner and broke the fabled George McAfee's club record for returns (42) and yards (456). The exciting Payton was the NFL kickoff return leader with a 31.7 average. The kicking game is only adequate, if at that, with Parsons averaging 39.0 yards on his punts and Bob Thomas making 13 of 23 field goals including a 55-yarder against the Rams.

1975 Season Results

CHICAGO (4-10)

7	*Baltimore	35
15	*Philadelphia	13
3	Minnesota	28
7	Detroit	27
3	Pittsburgh	34
9	*Minnesota	13
13	*Miami	46
27	*Green Bay	14
3	San Francisco	31
10	Los Angeles	38
7	Green Bay	28
25	*Detroit	21
20	*St. Louis	34
42	New Orleans	17

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Los Angeles Rams

HEAD COACH: CHUCK KNOX

Three straight Western Division titles and a 34-8 record, yet the Rams are restless. When a team reaches this lofty plateau, it wants to reach even higher, meaning the Super Bowl.

The Rams have been eliminated in the NFC title game the past two years, first by Minnesota, 14-10, and, in 1975, rather shockingly by Dallas, 37-7.

So, what do the Rams need to get them over the hump? Perhaps, it's that little extra charisma or spark supplied by quarterbacks like Roger Staubach or Fran Tarkenton—or a maturing James Harris.

OFFENSE

The Rams have won 19 regular season games and lost only four since Harris became a starting quarterback. He was having his best year of a six-year career when he was sidelined with a bruised shoulder in December. Jaworski, called the Polish Rifle, finished up in grand style, including a 10-3 win over Pittsburgh and opening playoff victory over St. Louis in which he completed 12 of 23 passes for 203 yards and one touchdown. Knox was then confronted with a vexing question before the Dallas game. Should he start Harris, who was reportedly healthy again, or go with the hot Jaworski. He went with Harris and was second guessed because the strong (6-4, 210) quarterback was off form, was intercepted leading to Dallas' first score and lasted only two series. Jaworski finished up and now Los Angeles has an old-fashioned quarterback controversy stirring again reminiscent of the Gabriel/Munson, Wade/Van Brocklin, Waterfield/Van Brocklin matchups. Harris is still No. 1, Knox says, but a shaky No. 1. The third quarterback might be the best passer. That's Pat Haden, the Rhodes scholar from USC who played part of the WFL's last season with the Sun.

The Rams are loaded with good running backs and they needed 'em because injuries thinned the ranks at one time last season. Lawrence McCutcheon, one of the NFL's most underrated backs, had another fine season with 911 yards and 31 pass receptions. Muscular Cullen Bryant and Jim Bertelsen, an excellent all-around back, alternated as Knox's play calling messengers. Bertelsen was lost for the playoffs by injury. John Cappelletti, the former Heisman Trophy winner, was the short-yardage specialist, while Rob Scribner, a tough special teams player and Rod Phillips were capable reserves. To this cast the Rams have added 5-5 Mack Herron, a speed back obtained on waivers from Atlanta.

The Rams were the NFC's third-best running team due in no small measure to the veteran offensive line. Tackle Charlie Cowan and guard Joe Scibelli will not be coming back, both retiring after 16 pro-



NO. 12—HARRIS NO. 45—BERTELSEN

ductive seasons. The new resident senior citizen is 11-year veteran Tom Mack, at left guard, while young Dennis Harrah probably will replace Scibelli. Nine year incumbent John Williams is the squad's eldest offensive tackle, with sophomore Doug France expected to replace Cowan. Al Oliver and Tom Nugent are fighting for tackle/guard survival, while veteran Rick Saul, very solid at center, will be backstopped by Rick Nuzum or Geoff Reece.

The Rams have two bombs away outside receivers in a conservative offense: Harold Jackson, who caught 43 passes for seven touchdowns in '75 and Ron Jessie, who caught 41. Jack Snow, and honored veteran, is in relief. The Rams say they have an All-Pro type tight end in Bob Klein and he was on his way to proving it with 16 catches, two touchdowns and blocking superbly, as usual, until a knee injury put him out in late November. Terry Nelson filled in but he's not as experienced or reliable as Klein.

DEFENSE

Defense is the rock on which Knox has built the Rams. The numbers tell the story; second in every defensive category in the NFC in addition to allowing only 135 points, second low in league history for a 14-game season.

And, it all starts with the front four, one of the league's best. This is especially true since Merlin Olsen, a sure Hall of Fame selection, decided to come back for a 15th season. Ole, who has been a Pro Bowl choice in each of his 14 seasons, is the acknowledged leader of a group consisting of fast Freddie Dryer and All-Pro Jack Youngblood at ends and Larry Brooks, the next All Pro at tackle.

A knee injury knocked Brooks out in the eighth game and he was replaced briefly by Bill Nelson and then Cody Jones, who finished up. Jones has some potential as does 1975 Notre Dame rookie Mike Fanning, who was hurt in the pre-season but came back to play in November.

Although the Rams lost Ken Geddes, a starting outside backer, to Seattle in the expansion draft, they've plenty of linebacking talent. Young Rick Kay and high draft choices Kevin McLain of Colorado State and Ron McCartney of Tennessee are possible replacements for Geddes. Pro Bowler Isiah Robertson, a linebacker who moves like a fullback, is on the other side, while the Rams have two strong middle backers in Jack Reynolds and Jim Youngblood (no relation to Jack).

The Rams secondary has been maligned in recent years because of constantly changing personnel but it proved more than adequate in 1975 despite season-ending injuries to cornerback Charlie Stukes and Al Clark. Rookie Monte Jackson played under control in place of the veterans, teaming with Eddie McMillan, who has since joined Geddes in Seattle. Stukes, Clark and Jackson will compete for starting jobs along with rookie Pat Thomas of Texas A&M (No. 2). The safeties are set. Dave Elmendorf is the thinking man's strong safety while Bill Simpson was a ball-hawking star in his first full season as a starter. He led the team in interceptions with six, recovered five fumbles and blocked a punt against the 49ers that was converted into a touchdown. Veteran Steve Preece is a safety backup.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Long-range placekicker Tom Dempsey had an outstanding season with 21 of 26 field goals, best percentage in the NFC. The Rams have gone through several punters in recent seasons and Duane Carrell is the incumbent now until someone else comes along.

Carrell averaged 39.4 yards and he might be challenged by free agent George Jakowenko or Rusty Jackson of the WFL.

Bertelsen is the team's best punt runner (13.10 average) sharing the job with Elmendorf (8.3). Bryant averaged 23.3 yards on 12 kickoff returns in '75, while Willie McGee, lost in the veteran allocation, averaged 23.8.

1975 Season Results

LOS ANGELES (12-2)

7	Dallas	18
23	San Francisco	14
24	*Baltimore	13
13	San Diego	10
22	*Atlanta	7
38	*New Orleans	14
42	Philadelphia	3
23	*San Francisco	24
16	Atlanta	7
38	*Chicago	10
20	Detroit	0
14	New Orleans	7
22	*Green Bay	5
10	*Pittsburgh	3

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

San Francisco 49ers

HEAD COACH: MONTE CLARK

The price was high: two first round draft choices in 1976, a first and second in 1977 and young quarterback Tom Owen. But, in acquiring quarterback Jim Plunkett from the New England Patriots, the San Francisco 49ers have probably resolved their biggest problem.

Since John Brodie retired in 1973, the 49ers have had ineffective leadership contributing to three losing seasons (5-9 in '73, 6-8 in '74 and 5-9 in '75) and prompting the dismissal of Dick Nolan, who had previously brought San Francisco three straight divisional titles.

Monte Clark, only 39, is the new 49er coach and his first big transaction, the Plunkett trade, might be the most meaningful of his coaching career as the 49ers try to become a contender in the NFC West, more recently known as the Rams' division.

Plunkett, unhappy in New England, will feel right at home in San Francisco, a city which identifies with the former Heisman Trophy winner from Stanford.

Clark, in his first head coaching assignment after building offensive lines for Don Shula at Miami for six seasons, isn't faced with a massive rebuilding job now that Plunkett is in the fold.

The offensive line is unsettled but the 49ers have talented young running backs and an excellent wide receiver in Gene Washington, Plunkett's teammate at Stanford for one season. The 49er defense isn't in that bad of shape, either. It ranked 10th in the NFL last season and worked over time because of a faltering defense.

Even with Plunkett, the 49ers don't have it all together, yet, but barring injuries, this is a club marked for improvement.

The 49ers had three quarterbacks in charge from time to time last year—Steve Spurrier, Norm Snead and Tom Owen. Only Snead, the 15-year veteran, remains as back-up to Plunkett. Spurrier was sent to Tampa Bay in exchange for wide receiver Willie McGee, an ex-Ram; young linebacker Bruce Elia and a draft choice. Plunkett's last season at New England was a disappointing one because arm and shoulder injuries kept him on the bench most of the time. But, if he's healthy (and he should be), the big, strong passer will evoke memories of Brodie.

San Francisco's running game wasn't much last season, ranking 12th in the NFC and averaging only 114.1 yards a game. The blockers contributed to this poor performance. Anyway, Clark inherits some quality runners: Del Williams, who averaged 5.4 yards last year, and tough Larry Schreiber, starters most of the time; Wilbur Jackson, the club's No. 1 draft choice in 1974, along with Kermit Johnson and Sammy Johnson. Jackson may get a try at fullback, which he means he'd team with Williams in a speed backfield.



QB JIM PLUNKETT

A few years ago the 49ers had one of the league's best blocking lines until Forrest Blue and Randy Biesler were traded (without much compensation). This left only two reliable veterans, tackle Cas Banaszek and guard Woody Peoples. Bill Reid, a free agent replaced Blue at center, but he'll be challenged by UCLA's Randy Cross, the 49ers' first draft choice on the second round and Ted Seifert, who played for the WFL Sun last season. Other young prospects are Jean Barrett and Keith Fahnhorst along with veteran guard John Watson.

The starting wide receivers, Gene Washington and improving Terry Beasley, are quality athletes. Washington caught nine touchdowns passes last year despite unsettled quarterbacking. But there could be a depth problem unless McGee, a sprinter type, or rookie Steve Rivera from California, a Howard Twilley type, develop. Ernie Holmes, a converted defensive back, was a disappointment in '75. The 49ers are thin at tight end, too. Veteran Tom Mitchell caught 25 passes for 3 touchdowns last season while playing injured and there isn't much behind him.

DEFENSE

Defense begins with the front four and the 49ers have a good defensive line. Cedrick Hardman, the 49ers' only Pro Bowl selection last year, and Tommy Hart rush

from outside with tackles Bob Hopkins and young Bill Sandifer supplying the inside rush. Hardman is All-Pro caliber. Two 1975 rookies, No. 1 pick Jimmy Webb, at tackle, and No. 4 choice, Cleveland Elam, at end, figure to improve.

Frank Nunley has survived all challenges as the 49ers' middle backer but Clark (like Nolan) wants to upgrade the position. So, Nunley, a 10-year veteran, gets competition from second-year man Greg Collins and from Elia, who has speed and ability. Skip Vanderbundt and Dave Washington were the starters on the outside most of the year, but Willie Harper, a starter before being injured, may reclaim one of the outside jobs.

The secondary is Clark's major concern. Jimmy Johnson has been a 49er cornerback for 15 seasons—some of them All Pro years—and Clark is trying to persuade him not to retire. Bruce Taylor is the other starting cornerback but is inconsistent. Strong safety Mel Phillips, one of the league's best, has broken his arm five times the past three seasons and is questionable.

Regular free safety Ralph McGill also was injured most of last season and his status is doubtful. So Clark went to the draft to stabilize his secondary, selecting Eddie Lewis of Kansas (2), Anthony Leonard of Virginia Union (5), Jay Chesley of Vanderbilt (7), and Larry Brumfield of Indiana State (13), along with free agent Joe Washington of Illinois State.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Rookie Steve Mike-Mayer was in and out as field goal kicker last year, although he beat the Rams with a last-season 54 yarder. Tom Wittum was a reliable punter, No. 3 ranked in the NFL with a 41.9 yard average. The 49ers lost Manny Moore, a fine special teams player, to Tampa Bay in the expansion draft. He excelled in kick coverage but there's plenty of return talent in McGee, Taylor, McGill and Kermit Johnson.

1975 Season Results SAN FRANCISCO (5-9)

17	Minnesota	27
14	*Los Angeles	23
20	Kansas City	3
3	*Atlanta	17
35	*New Orleans	21
16	New England	24
17	*Detroit	28
24	Los Angeles	23
31	*Chicago	3
16	New Orleans	6
17	Philadelphia	27
13	*Houston	27
9	Atlanta	31
23	*N.Y. Giants	26

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Atlanta Falcons

HEAD COACH: MARION CAMPBELL

Of the four members of the 4-10 club in 1975—Eagles, Packers, Bears and Falcons—Atlanta's prospects for moving into a more respectable bracket are the most promising.

Sure, Marion Campbell's team had the worst overall defense in the NFC last year but the return of All-Pro defensive end Claude Humphrey is bound to improve the quality of this unit.

When Humphrey went down and out with a knee injury in a pre-season game, the Falcons lost 16 sacks and 75 individual and 20 assisted tackles—his numbers for 1974.

Moreover, it appears that the Falcons, who couldn't come up with a class quarterback under former coach Norm Van Brocklin (a great quarterback himself), seemingly have found one in Steve Bartkowski.

Bartkowski's statistics weren't all that impressive last year but considering he was only a rookie (the best Campbell has ever seen) and the Falcons were groping, he had a fine season.

Bartkowski, the former California All-American, has leadership qualities and a strong arm and all he needs is experience. He'll be even more effective this season with the acquisition of John Gilliam, one of the league's best wide receivers who played out his option in Minnesota and signed on with Atlanta.

Strangely, the Falcons never were much on offense under Van Brocklin, a sound offensive thinker. Yet, they began to show some offensive flair under Campbell, a defensive coach.

Atlanta scored 27 or more points in four of its last five games against the likes of Denver, Oakland, Washington and San Francisco.

If Campbell can bring Atlanta back to its former strong defensive posture, the Falcons might be interesting.

OFFENSE

Bartkowski completed only 45% of his passes and was intercepted 15 times but he did throw 13 touchdowns passes even though he missed some games because of injury. His percentage would have been better if hadn't been for some drops. Off the promise he showed his rookie season, it's reasonable to expect Bartkowski to mature into one of the league's better quarterbacks the next three or four years. Pat Sullivan, the former Heisman Trophy winner who played out his option, and Kim McQuilken are better than average backups.

Dave Hampton was regarded as the Comeback Player of the Year after rebounding from a leg injury to rush for 1000 yards—a figure that barely eluded him in 1972 and '73. Haskell Stanback,



NO. 43—DAVE HAMPTON

moving from halfback to fullback, complemented Hampton. He was a sound blocker and averaged 4.2 yards a carry. Then there's Bubba Bean, the hard-running No. 1 draft choice from Texas A & M, who could become a regular along with returning reserves Woody Thompson and Monroe Eley and Sonny Collins, the No. 2 pick from Kentucky.

Despite the loss of All-Pro tackle George Kundz, who was traded to Baltimore for the draft rights to Bartkowski, Campbell generally was pleased with the performance of his offensive line. Guard Len Gotshalk made the successful conversion from guard to tackle and Dennis Havig, Royce Smith and young Larron Jackson all played commendably as did Jeff Van Note, an All-Pro type center. Others who figure are Paul Ryczek and Ted Fritsch, coming back from an injury. Sleeper: Phil McKinnely of UCLA, a ninth-round choice.

The Falcons expected things from Bartkowski, so little Al Jenkins (5-10, 172) was the big offensive surprise in '75. The former WFL outside receiver caught 38 passes for six touchdowns and a 20.2 yard average. He'll be even more effective with Gilliam, a home run threat, on the other side, and Jim Mitchell, the great tight end also available to bother defenses. He caught 34 passes for four touchdowns and a 15.8 average. In reserve on the outside are steady Ken Burrow, who could be a starter again, and Wally Francis.

DEFENSE

Campbell reasons that having Humphrey back is just like picking up another first-round draft choice. He and John Zook, who led the club in sacks with nine in '75, are one of the best defensive end tandems in the league. Mike Tillemann and Mike Lewis are not in this class as tackles but they'll do. Jeff Merrow and Roy Hilton did a reasonable job of filling in for Humphrey last season and will see playing time in '76. Tackle Dave Scott, a No. 3 from Kansas, is a prospect, too. Atlanta has to tighten its defense again the rush and pass, allowing an average of 343.7 total yards a game.

If Tommy Nobis, the veteran middle backer, can stay healthy as he did in '75, Campbell should have sound linebacking. Nobis will be flanked by veteran Greg Brezina and rangy Fulton Kuykendall, a second-year pro from UCLA. Ralph Ortega in the middle and Carl Russ on the outside (a position switch) are the active reserves.

Campbell got outstanding cornerback play last year from Rolland Lawrence, who intercepted nine passes, second only to Minnesota's Paul Krause (10) in the NFC. Sam Williams, obtained in trade from San Diego, is expected to team with Lawrence at cornerback. The safeties, Ray Brown on the weakside and Ray Easterling on the strong side, are improving but lack experience.

SPECIAL TEAMS

John James, a Pro Bowl punter, averaged 41.5 yards and put six punts down inside the 10-yard line. He's solid. The same can't be said of Nick Mike-Mayer, who slumped in 1975, hitting only 4 of 10 field goals. Mack Herron, since traded to Los Angeles, was the Falcons' top punt runner with a 9.4 average. Eley and Jenkins, who saw specialty service last season, perhaps will see more of it in '76. Several players are available for kickoff return duty including Francis, Eley, Thompson and Lawrence.

1975 Season Results

ATLANTA (4-10)		
20	St. Louis	23
14	*Detroit	17
14	*New Orleans	7
17	San Francisco	3
7	Los Angeles	22
14	*Cincinnati	21
7	New Orleans	23
0	Minnesota	38
7	*Los Angeles	16
35	*Denver	21
34	Oakland	37
27	*Washington	30
31	*San Francisco	4
13	Green Bay	22

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

New Orleans Saints

HEAD COACH: HANK STRAM

This season will mark the Saints' 10th anniversary in the National Football League and they're no better off now than they were as a first-year expansion club.

New Orleans had a 2-12 record last season compared to 3-11 in 1967 and, in the interim, the club has drafted poorly, made some questionable trades, never won more than five games and has changed coaches at owner John Mecom's whim on the average of about every two years.

The latest head coach, Hank Stram, at least has imposing credentials. He was considered an innovator in the early '70's at Kansas City, where he won a Super Bowl. But he had some internal problems within the organization and his contract wasn't renewed last year.

"Our goal is to upgrade the Saints in every way possible," says Stram—and that's some order. But he seemingly got off on the right track by making California's Chuck Muncie (6-3, 218) and Missouri's Tony Galbreath (6-0, 235), his top two draft choices. Then, he picked five more offensive players before turning to defense.

Stram has also assembled an experienced coaching staff including Dick Stanfel, a highly regarded offensive line coach, and Jim Garrett, former head coach of the WFL Houston Texans.

Now all he needs are players.

OFFENSE

The acquisition of Muncie and Galbreath plus holdover Mike Strachan, a free agent running surprise in '75, suggests that the Saints will be a running-oriented team. Not necessarily so, says Stram, adding, "We'll feature a variety-personality offense (whatever that is)." Stram better hope that one personality—injury-troubled Archie Manning—is sound in '76. Manning, who'd probably be a star quarterback on any other team, had surgery for bicep tendinitis in the off season. He played in pain last year, completing only 47% of his passes while being intercepted 17 times. The other quarterbacks who have been regulars from time to time are Larry Cipa and Bobby Scott. Joining them from San Diego is Bobby Douglass, the quarterback who runs (and passes) like a fullback.

Strachan was the Saints' MVP last season, rushing for 661 yards (4.1 average) until he broke his ankle in the 11th game against Cleveland. He teamed with Alex Maxson, who gained only 371 yards (2.7 average). Muncie, the first back chosen in the draft, is a versatile athlete. He has speed, some power and is a good receiver. Galbreath is power. Other contenders are Rod McNeill, the Saints' No. 3 rusher in '75 (314 average), Andrew Jones and Steve Rogers.

Ask any one at the Old Absinthe House and they'll tell you the Saints' No. 1 prior-



NO. 8—ARCHIE MANNING

ity is offensive linemen. Only three offensive blockers have been drafted on the first round since 1969 and the saints traded two of them, John Shimmers and Royce Smith. The third, Kurt Schumacher of Ohio State, was slowed by injury in 1975, his rookie season.

The offensive line returns intact (and that may not be saying much), excepting tackle Dave Thompson, picked by Tampa in the expansion draft. Don Morrison is a six-year veteran at right tackle, backed up or replaced by Bob Simmons, a No. 3 from Texas and an All-American. Emanuel Zanders apparently is a mainstay at right guard, while John Hill and Lee Gross are the centers. Schumacher is the apparent incumbent at left guard ahead of Jake Kupp, a 13-year pro. Phil LaPorta has the edge at left tackle but he'll be pressured by Chris Morris and Scott Parrish, a No. 5 from Utah State.

Wide receivers didn't contribute much to New Orleans' passing game, worst in the NFC, as Larry Burton, the No. 1 choice from Purdue in '75, caught only 16 passes—the most for his position. However, he was hampered by a hamstring pull. Joel Parker also played injured (a knee). Other wide receivers are veteran Don Herrmann, the former Giant; Gil Chapman, and Dave Davis, out with a knee injury in '75. Tinker Owens, a No. 4 from Oklahoma, might break in here. The tight end situation is better. Paul Seals caught 28 passes for 414 yards and is backed up Henry Childs, 10 for 179.

DEFENSE

Compared to the offense, the defensive personnel should demand raises but there's still a lot of room for improvement.

Veteran defensive end Joe Owens was lost to Seattle in the expansion draft but Steve Baumgartner, Andy Dorris, Elois Grooms and Richard Huckle should be able to fill up the outside rushing lanes. On the inside, Bob Pollard and former starter Elex Price will fight it out, while veteran Derland Moore is expected to hold off rookie Warren Peiffer of Iowa.

The linebacking corps should be better with the return of Wayne Colman and Jim Merlo, both out with injuries last year. Joe Federspiel, one of the league's better middle backers, returns for his fifth season. He had 115 tackles in '75, more than any other Saint. Veteran Rick Kingrea backs up Federspiel, while 17th round draft choice Greg Westbrook, who finished the season as a starter last year, pushes Merlo on the left, with Rusty Chambers No. 2 behind Colman on the right.

The opposition completed 58.2% of its passes against the Saints in '75, so Stram has to tighten up the secondary. However, Tom Meyers is an All-Pro prospect at free safety, while Johnny Fuller and Chuck Crist are the front runners at strong safety. Maurice Spencer took a starting left cornerback back spot away from Bivian Lee, who hopes to win it back this season. Tough, little Ernie Jackson (5-10, 175) holds down the right corner with competition from Terry Schmidt.

SPECIAL TEAMS

With the offense sputtering, Tom Blanchard has been an active punter with 88 punts in 1974 and 92 last year. Still, he averaged 41.0 yards. Soccer-style place-kicker Rich Szaro, who made 10 of 16 field goals in '75, will be competing against another soccer stylist, Ron Slovensky, who played for Birmingham of the WFL last season. Gil Chapman was runnerup in the NFC as a punt return specialist with a 12.2 average, and had a 21.9 average on kick-off run backs. Also available as specialist runners are Tommy Myers, Rod McNeill, Mike Strachan and free agent Charlie Thomas.

1975 Season Results

NEW ORLEANS (2-12)

3	Washington	41
0	*Cincinnati	21
7	Atlanta	14
20	*Green Bay	19
21	San Francisco	35
14	Los Angeles	38
23	*Atlanta	7
10	Oakland	48
7	*Minnesota	20
6	*San Francisco	16
16	Cleveland	17
7	*Los Angeles	14
14	N.Y. Giants	28
17	*Chicago	42

*DENOTES HOME GAME



NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE—WESTERN DIVISION

Seattle Seahawks

HEAD COACH: JACK PATERA

Jack Patera is a defensive man. He helped develop the Rams' original fearsome foursome of Merlin Olsen, Deacon Jones, Rosey Grier and Lamar Lundy.

Later he was the defensive line coach for the Minnesota Vikings and worked with the Purple Gang—Carl Eller, Alan Page, Jim Marshall and Gary Larsen.

So it isn't surprising with Patera, in his first head coaching assignment with the Seattle Seahawks, an expansion entry, that he would stress defense in building the team.

"You start with defense," said the 42-year-old Patera and, on paper, he didn't do so badly in selecting expendable players from established NFL teams.

There's Mike Curtis, the former All-Pro middle backer from Baltimore; Ken Geddes, a starting outside linebacker with the Rams, safety Al Matthews from Green Bay and cornerback Eddie McMillan from Los Angeles, both starters, defensive end Joe Owens from New Orleans and linebacker Don Hansen from Atlanta.

Moreover, Patera's first two picks in the collegiate draft were defensive players—giant tackle Steve Niehaus of Notre Dame and linebacker Sammy Green of Florida.

As for the other phase of the game, offense, Patera doesn't seem to be too concerned that he doesn't have too much firepower.

It probably won't make much difference his first year, anyway. People in Seattle were so anxious to be part of the NFL scene that 59,000 season tickets for the new Kingdom were sold in three weeks.

Patera's view of the season in which he'll play every NFC team and the other expansion baby, Tampa Bay is: "Controlled optimism."

OFFENSE

For sheer numbers, the Seahawks are loaded at quarterback. They went into training camp with seven, but only two of them, Neil Graff of New England and Gary Keithley of St. Louis, both back-ups, have any appreciable playing time. The others are rookies Steve Meyer of New Mexico and Chris Rowland of Washington, and free agents Jim Zorn, Bob Cason and Scott Christman. Patera might sign a big name QB who has played out his option like Roman Gabriel of Philadelphia or Pat Sullivan of Atlanta. But Graff seems a likely starter. "At least we know he'll be able to take the snap from center," Patera joked.

The running back picture is rather bleak, too. Only Bill Olds, a three-year veteran from Baltimore, and Kerry Marbury of West Virginia and the Canadian League can call themselves experienced. Gary Hayman, a running back-wide receiver from Buffalo, is renowned only as O.J. Simpson's backup. There won't be much help from rookies as Patera has only three low draft choices:



NO. 32—MIKE CURTIS

Andrew Bolton of Fisk, Larry Bates of Miami and Andy Reid of Georgia.

The situation is better on the offensive line. There's tackle Norm Evans, a 10-year veteran; John Demarie, a once honored guard with Cleveland; Houston center Fred Hoaglin; Kansas City guard Rocky Rasley; Atlanta tackle Nick Bebout; Detroit tackle Gordon Jolley, San Francisco guard Bob Penchion and center Art Kuehn, a starter with Southern California in the WFL.

Seattle has an outstanding outside receiver in Ahmad Rashad (the former Bobby Moore), who played out his option with Buffalo and signed with the Seahawks. Before Rashad was acquired in the off-season, the Seahawks were prepared to get by with much traveled Dave Williams, lately of the WFL Sun and an NFL veteran. Wide receivers Sam McCullum of Minnesota, Don Clune of the Giants and Bob Picard of Philadelphia and Dallas tight end Ron Howard, all undistinguished reserves, were the only receivers acquired in the veteran allocation. Otherwise, the Seahawks have an assortment of free agents and two high draft choices—Sherman Smith of Miami, Ohio and Steve Raible of Georgia—available to catch passes from a no-name quarterback.

Seattle and Tampa get first call on players waived by other teams and, it's obvious that the Seahawks will need some of

them for the skilled offensive positions.

DEFENSE

Patera lives for defense and he figures he's got a fair nucleus for a front four with such veterans as Carl Barisch of Cleveland, Larry Woods of the New York Jets, Dave Tipton of San Diego and Wayne Baker of San Francisco plus Niehaus, the 6-4, 270-pound No. 1 pick from Notre Dame.

But the real quality, comparatively, is at linebacker. "I love to shuffle the linebackers' names on paper," said Patera. "They look so good."

And, so they do: Curtis, Geddes, Hansen, Ed Bradley of Pittsburgh and Ken Hutcherson of Green Bay in addition to such rookies as Green, Randy Coffield of Florida State and free agent Gordon Riegel of Stanford.

It appears that the secondary will be formed mainly from the veteran allocation. The prospects: McMillan, Matthews, Lyle Blackwood of Cincinnati, Steve Taylor of Denver, Jerry Davis of the Jets, Rolly Woolsey of Dallas, Rondy Colbert of the Giants, Dave Brown of Pittsburgh and Dwayne Crump of St. Louis.

SPECIAL TEAMS

Patera didn't get a kicker from the veteran allocation, probably figuring that he'll claim one on waivers. He might have his placekicker in 5-7, 166-pound Don Bitterlich of Temple, who set five NCAA records in 1975, including most field goals (21) in a season. Another rookie, Rick Engles of Tulsa, is a prospective punter. He was nation's No. 2 punter in '75, averaging 46.6 yards per kick.

Colbert, the former Giant, is an experienced punt and kickoff runner, averaging 8.8 and 24.0 yards respectively in 1975.



NO. 36—KEN GEDDES

"Oakland has it made"

Seattle's first appearance in our EASY/TOUGH SCHEDULE chart shows the Seahawks with a slightly easier schedule than Tampa Bay's. Seattle plays a full slate of NFC rivals, who totaled 88 wins and 94 defeats last year, while the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, the other newcomers, meet only AFC teams, and they had the opposite record last year, 94-88.

In 1975, basing the team's opposition level by the success of its opponents, the Minnesota Vikings had the breeze of breezes. The Vikes were the only team not to play a single game (during the regular season) against a team which ultimately made the playoffs. (Every other team had at least two such opponents.) And the Vikings and Rams each played only four games against teams which ended the season at .500 or better. Cleveland had a disastrous schedule, its 14 game opponents totaling a .648 winning percentage for the year. The Browns played seven playoff teams and 11 season winners.

Rating the 1976 schedules by what the opponents did in 1975, Oakland has the easiest itinerary, on paper at least, playing teams which totaled only a .407 winning percentage. The Raiders will meet only two teams which made the 1975 playoffs, and only three which had winning seasons in '75.

The worst advance schedule in years, on this chart, belongs to the 1976 Giants. Their opponents, playing at a .632 pace, won 12 more games than San Diego's rivals, and the Chargers for years have drawn consistently tough schedules. But this year's Giants must face seven 1975 playoff teams and 10 which played at even or better.

Keep the schedules of the Giants and Chargers in mind as you pick 'em this year, Vin DiTrani and Mal Florence.

THE NFL'S EASY/TOUGH 1975 SCHEDULE, BASED BY THE TOTAL 1975 WON/LOST MARKS OF EACH TEAM'S 1975 OPPONENTS.

	OPP. WON	OPP. LOST	PCT.	A	B
1. MINNESOTA	65	131	.332	0	4
2. LOS ANGELES	75	121	.383	3	4
3. ST. LOUIS	83	113	.423	2	6
4. OAKLAND	84	112	.429	2	5
5. SAN FRANCISCO	86	110	.439	3	5
6. MIAMI	87	109	.444	3	6
7. BALTIMORE	88	108	.449	2	6
8. DALLAS	90	106	.459	3	6
9. CINCINNATI	90	106	.459	3	6
10. PITTSBURGH	92	104	.469	3	6
11. DENVER	92	104	.469	4	6
12. NEW YORK GIANTS	97	99	.495	5	8
13. KANSAS CITY	98	98	.500	5	7
14. DETROIT	100	96	.510	5	6
15. NEW ORLEANS	100	96	.510	5	6
16. WASHINGTON	102	94	.520	6	7
17. HOUSTON	103	93	.526	5	8
18. GREEN BAY	107	89	.546	5	8
19. ATLANTA	108	88	.551	6	8
20. BUFFALO	109	87	.556	6	8
21. NEW ENGLAND	111	85	.566	5	10
22. SAN DIEGO	112	84	.571	6	7
23. CHICAGO	112	84	.571	6	9
24. NEW YORK JETS	114	82	.582	6	10
25. PHILADELPHIA	116	80	.592	6	9
26. CLEVELAND	127	69	.648	7	11

A—Games played during the 1975 season against teams which made the 1975 playoffs.

B—Games played during the 1975 season against teams which had a .500 or better won/lost percentage in 1975.

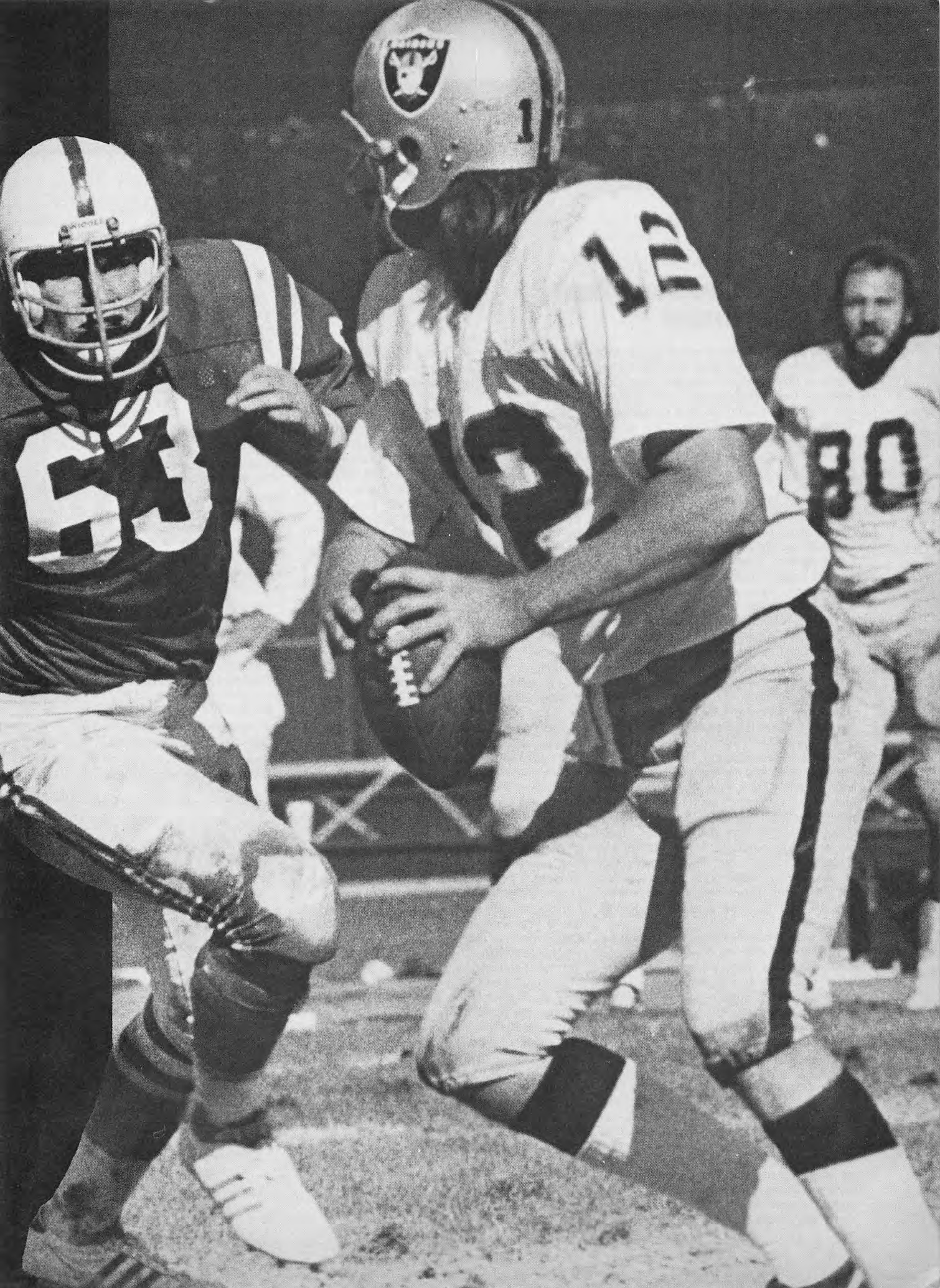
THE NFL'S EASY/TOUGH 1976 SCHEDULE, RATED BY THE TOTAL 1975 WON/LOST MARKS OF EACH TEAM'S 1976 OPPONENTS

	OPP. WON	OPP. LOST	PCT.	A	B
1. OAKLAND	74	108	.407	2	3
2. DENVER	75	107	.412	3	4
3. MINNESOTA	80	102	.440	2	5
4. ATLANTA	80	102	.440	3	5
5. SAN FRANCISCO	80	102	.440	4	5
6. LOS ANGELES	82	100	.451	3	5
7. DETROIT	82	100	.451	3	5
8. DALLAS	84	98	.462	3	6
9. WASHINGTON	84	98	.462	4	5
10. BUFFALO	86	96	.473	3	7
11. ST. LOUIS	87	95	.478	4	6
12. SEATTLE	88	94	.484	4	6
13. BALTIMORE	92	90	.505	3	8
14. KANSAS CITY	92	90	.505	4	7
15. MIAMI	92	90	.505	5	7
16. NEW ORLEANS	93	89	.511	4	6
17. TAMPA BAY	94	88	.516	4	7
18. GREEN BAY	94	88	.516	5	7
19. NEW YORK JETS	95	87	.522	3	8
20. HOUSTON	95	87	.522	6	7
21. PITTSBURGH	96	86	.527	4	7
22. CLEVELAND	100	82	.549	4	7
23. NEW ENGLAND	100	82	.549	4	9
24. CINCINNATI	101	81	.555	5	7
25. CHICAGO	102	80	.560	5	8
26. PHILADELPHIA	102	80	.560	6	8
27. SAN DIEGO	103	79	.566	5	7
28. NEW YORK GIANTS	115	67	.632	7	10

A—Games scheduled for the 1976 season against teams which made the 1975 playoffs.

B—Games scheduled for the 1976 season against teams with a .500 or better won/lost percentage in 1975.

"Pity the poor Giants"



NFL PREDICTIONS

American Football Conference

Pittsburgh will have several serious challenges in its path to a third consecutive Super Bowl triumph. First, the Steelers must escape their own division with powerful Cincinnati and rejuvenated Houston ready to challenge. Then its the AFC playoffs with other possible roadblocks like Oakland, Miami, and Baltimore. Finally, there is winning the big one itself.

But of all the challenges perhaps the biggest one facing Pittsburgh is the law of averages. No team in the brief history of Super Bowls has won the thing three times running. And only twice in the history of professional football has a team won three consecutive league titles.

The Steelers, however, have the talent to defeat even the law of averages. The basic cast from Super Bowls IX and X return, augmented by a splendid draft which had scouts from lesser organizations shaking their heads in amazement, and envy.

Rushing, passing, receiving, blocking—the Steeler offense has it all. Pass rush, pass coverage, rushing defense—the Pittsburgh Steel Curtain Unit has it all. Special teams are as good as any in the league and Chuck Noll has established himself as a master tactician and handler of troops.

So, for a third year running, the Steelers are the choice to win it all in the National Football League. It's not going to be easy, for reasons listed above. But the Pittsburgh organization is so strong that at least in 1976 it should rule the NFL.

The race in the AFC Central should be a down-to-the-wire affair with three clubs battling for the lead. All three are relatively equal in schedule strength, too. Key dates down the stretch will be Pittsburgh at Cincinnati Nov. 28, and Pittsburgh at Houston Dec. 11. The Steelers get a break in between, however, meeting the expansion Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The Bengals should nail down the wild card spot once again as Ken Anderson gets a new offensive toy to play with—an Archie Griffin doll. In college, you would him up and he gained better than 100 yards per game. Houston should continue its strong push for the playoffs thanks to a rock-ribbed defense and an improved attack. But the Oilers are just a notch behind their playoff compatriots.

Cleveland, once a power, will continue its rebuilding under Forrest Gregg and should finish a distant fourth in the AFC Central.

It should be a three-horse race in the AFC East, too, with Baltimore, last year's Cinderella club, fighting Miami and Buffalo down the stretch. But the Dolphins, with a bunch of young players hardened under somewhat strenuous circumstances a year ago, should prevail. The Dolphins have a lot of last year's wounded back, too, and let's not forget Don Shula. He's a master, as he proved last year. Miami had a superlative draft, also.

Baltimore will level off a bit as the lack of a big running back and super middle linebacker show. The Bills, still reeling from a series of defensive losses a year ago, will make it close on offense as O.J., Ferguson, and the crew score against everyone. But whether Lou Saban is able to retool his defense in a championship manner is another question.

The Patriots, switching from Jim Plunkett to Steve Grogan, and the Jets, under Lou Holtz, will have difficulty making waves in this division.

Oakland should win again in the AFC West as it boasts the softest schedule in the entire NFL. Denver, also with a weak slate, should finish second and mount more of a challenge than it did last year. The return of Otis Armstrong makes the Broncos a better club already.

San Diego, if its offensive newcomers perform as well as its defensive additions did a year ago, could surprise. Kansas City, with five huge holes on defense, will be kept from the cellar by the addition of Tampa Bay. The Bucs will be housed in the AFC West this year and play each AFC team, plus Seattle, once during the season. Next year, Tampa Bay moves to the NFC Central with Seattle moving into the AFC Central.

All playoff games should be close since the margin of difference between the top AFC teams isn't that great. The Steelers will edge Miami and Oakland will top Cincinnati once again in the playoffs. Then in the latest of a string of great Pittsburgh-Oakland confrontations, the Steelers will prevail on an overtime Roy Gerela field goal. Then it will be on to Pasadena and Super Bowl XI where Pittsburgh will top the law of averages and Mal Florence's Vikings, 20-7.

DITRANI'S 1976 PREDICTIONS AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Eastern Division

First—Miami Dolphins
Second—Baltimore Colts
Third—Buffalo Bills
Fourth—New England Patriots
Fifth—New York Jets

Central Division

First—Pittsburgh Steelers
Second—Cincinnati Bengals*
Third—Houston Oilers
Fourth—Cleveland Browns

Western Division

First—Oakland Raiders
Second—Denver Broncos
Third—San Diego Chargers
Fourth—Kansas City Chiefs
Fifth—Tampa Bay Buccaneers
*—Wild card team

AFC DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Pittsburgh (24) over Miami (17)
Oakland (20) over Cincinnati (10)

AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Pittsburgh (23) over Oakland (20) (OT)

SUPER BOWL XI

Pittsburgh (20) over Minnesota (7)



BY VIN DI TRANI

National Football Conference

Last year we referred to the National Football Conference as an old established men's club which resists change. There's no apparent reason to alter this conception in 1976.

Minnesota still is the thunder in the Central Division; Los Angeles is too well balanced to be replaced in the West and Dallas, a young, talented team, probably will win in the East, the NFC's most competitive division.

The only difference is that some runners-up, such as Detroit, San Francisco and perhaps Atlanta or New York, appear stronger this year—but not strong enough to disrupt the establishment.

Last year we expressed some doubt that St. Louis could surprise anyone again with its big play attack. We didn't put them in the playoffs and we were wrong as they won in the East with a fine record (11-3).

But we weren't wrong about Los Angeles, Minnesota and Dallas and even picked the Cowboys to beat the Vikings in a first-round playoff game. We should have quit while we were ahead, making the error of picking the Rams to beat the Cowboys and represent the NFC in the Super Bowl. It was a 37-7 mistake.

Now to 1976. Again the best race is in the East with St. Louis, Dallas and Washington all challenging. But if Dallas can get to the Super Bowl in a supposed rebuilding year, the Cowboys may be even better this season and most likely will prevail in the East—but not without a fight.

As for the Central Division, the Vikings may have to work a bit harder to hold off the Lions, who are benefiting from some good drafts. Their 7-7 record was misleading because of an inordinate number of injuries.

Green Bay and Chicago don't figure. Too many questionable positions.

In the West, Los Angeles, like Minnesota, may have some difficulty clinching a title by mid-season. If Jim Plunkett is healthy, he could revitalize San Francis-

co. And Steve Bartkowski, the young Atlanta quarterback, will benefit from a year's experience and the addition of wide receiver John Gilliam to the passing offense.

Now for the playoffs.

The Vikings, with the best record in the NFC (something like 11-3 or 12-2), will be home for the playoffs. And, they'll bully the wild-card Cardinals in an opening round game—exactly like in 1974.

The other paring pits the Rams against the Cowboys in a playoff rematch. Dallas' 37-7 rout of Los Angeles at the Coliseum last year surprised the Cowboys even more than the Rams—if that's possible.

It has been theorized that the Rams, mentally geared to tough it out against the Vikings in frigid Bloomington, let down after Dallas surprised Minnesota. The Rams, so ecstatic that they didn't have to slip and slide with the Vikings as they have so often in the Midwest, weren't emotionally high for the Cowboys. They had been thinking about the Vikings all along.

Dallas, with momentum and the proper mental attitude (some of the players said they were a little scared), humiliated Los Angeles with a near perfect game.

Perhaps the Cowboys would have beaten the Rams under any circumstances. Anyway, the Rams will have had an entire year to stew about their collapse. Thus, we'll predict a narrow Los Angeles victory in the rematch.

This sets up a conference championship game between the Vikings and Rams and they're evenly matched. But, in the past, the Vikings usually have managed to beat the Rams when it counted, however slight the margin, and we'll still adhere to this trend.

As for the Super Bowl, we'll play a hunch. The Vikings have been there three previous times and always have been turned away a loser. This time they'll cash in... yes, even with the strong Steelers as opposition.

FLORENCE'S 1976 PREDICTIONS NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

Eastern Division

First—Dallas Cowboys
Second—St. Louis Cardinals*
Third—Washington Redskins
Fourth—New York Giants
Fifth—Philadelphia Eagles

Central Division

First—Minnesota Vikings
Second—Detroit Lions
Third—Green Bay Packers
Fourth—Chicago Bears

Western Division

First—Los Angeles Rams
Second—San Francisco 49ers
Third—Atlanta Falcons
Fourth—New Orleans Saints
*--Wild card team

NFC DIVISIONAL PLAYOFFS

Los Angeles (24) over Dallas (20)
Minnesota (38) over St. Louis (21)

NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Minnesota (10) over Los Angeles (7)

SUPER BOWL XI

Minnesota (19) over Pittsburgh (12)



BY MAL FLORENCE

"Be scientific about it"

Predictions are a strange facet of off-season football. If you were asked to pick the winner in the upcoming Super Bowl, the actual uncolored odds would be 26-1 (now 28-1) against you, since only one team in 26 wins it each year. Yet, Super Bowl history says you could beat 26-1 easily just by picking a repeat winner. So far, there have been nine chances to pick repeaters in the Super Bowl. Had you done so, you'd have found yourself correct 33.3% of the time—a 3-1 picker. The Packers, Dolphins and Steelers all repeated in those first ten Super Bowl years.

This book is not in the contest business, but in each edition, we invite our readers to predict which eight NFL teams will make the playoffs the next year. In five seasons, no one, yet, has predicted correctly eight out of eight. There's always a St. Louis or a Baltimore to break through and foul up the logic.

In the late summer of 1975, several hundred readers of PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL sent in their selections, and only ten picked as many as seven of the eight. All ten missed on Baltimore, which surprised even the prognosticators from Maryland, not one of whom thought Baltimore would make it.

Four of the ten picked Buffalo: David Glastetter of St. Louis, Mo.; Bob Brown of Reisterstown, Md.; Leon Crawford of Beatrice, Nebr.; and Rodney Galton of Danielson, Conn.

Six selected Miami: Larry Burroughs of Ferguson, Mo.; Gary Mioli of Huntington Station, N.Y.; Chuck Limmer of Arcadia, Calif.; Gary Brassard of Fitchburg, Mass.; Kenneth E. Fisher of Waynesboro, Va. and Jeff Crawley of Butte, Mont.

Many ladies predicted, but none matched these ten males.

The offer still goes. If anyone selects all eight teams, if the list is the only one received from that family at that address, and if the predictions are in our hands by September 11, 1976, we'll print the name(s) of our eight-for-eight expert(s) in the 1977 PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL. Our address: PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL, Specialty Publications, Petersen Publishing Co., 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif., 90069.

There are several ways to check out a schedule to see if it's a good one for your team. One way is to consider the mathematical strength of the 14-game opposition. This we do on our EASY/TOUGH SCHEDULE CHARTS on page 66.

Another method is to see who is getting off to a good start geographically, who has the most off-beat (other than Sunday 1 PM) starting times, and which teams are favored with the Thanksgiving Day schedule.

The two New York teams, jammed by major league baseball schedules, each plays its first four games—and five of its first six—on the road. Sure, it's all downhill later, if you haven't become discouraged in the first six weeks.

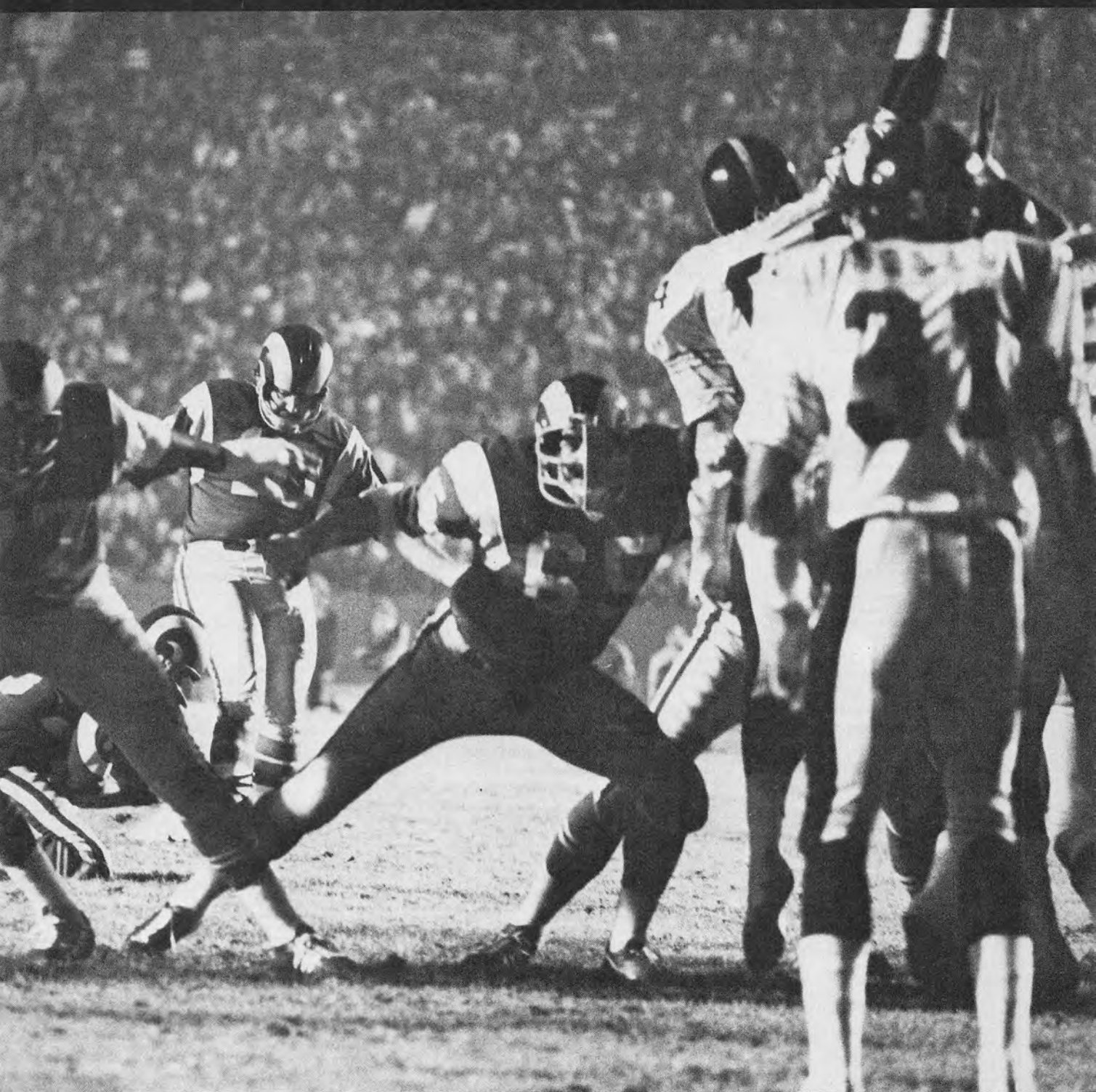
Oakland also plays five of its first six on the road, five in a row after opening at home against the Super Bowl champion Steelers.

This year, the Thanksgiving Day games are of equal convenience to the four participants, Buffalo, Detroit, St. Louis and Dallas. No one has to hop out of his time zone to make the game, and all four have a tremendous advantage over their opponents ten days later, each using an extra three days to recover from the bumps and bruises.

The Rams have an unusual assortment of non-Sunday and non-1 PM starting times, just to keep from getting into a routine. And if they should get into the Super Bowl, they'll be the first Super Bowl participants to ride to the game in their own cars. It's to be played in the Pasadena Rose Bowl.



PHOTO BY GLENN COOPER



“Put your name here”

1976 NFL SCHEDULES

REGULAR SEASON 1976

(All times local)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 (First Weekend)

Baltimore at New England	1:00
Denver at Cincinnati	1:00
Detroit at Chicago	1:00
Los Angeles at Atlanta	1:00
Minnesota at New Orleans	1:00
New York Giants at Washington	1:00
New York Jets at Cleveland	1:00
Philadelphia at Dallas	1:00
Pittsburgh at Oakland	1:00
St. Louis at Seattle	1:00
San Diego at Kansas City	1:00
San Francisco at Green Bay	1:00
Tampa Bay at Houston	1:00

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Miami at Buffalo	9:00
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 (Second Weekend)

Atlanta at Detroit	1:00
Chicago at San Francisco	1:00
Cincinnati at Baltimore	2:00
Cleveland at Pittsburgh	1:00
Dallas at New Orleans	1:00
Green Bay at St. Louis	1:00
Houston at Buffalo	1:00
Los Angeles at Minnesota	3:00
Miami at New England	1:00
New York Giants at Philadelphia	1:00
New York Jets at Denver	2:00
San Diego at Tampa Bay	1:00
Seattle at Washington	1:00

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Oakland at Kansas City	8:00
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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 (Third Weekend)

Atlanta at Chicago	1:00
Baltimore at Dallas	3:00
Buffalo at Tampa Bay	1:00
Cleveland at Denver	2:00
Green Bay at Cincinnati	1:00
Minnesota at Detroit	1:00
New England at Pittsburgh	1:00
New Orleans at Kansas City	1:00
New York Giants at Los Angeles	1:00
New York Jets at Miami	1:00
Oakland at Houston	1:00
St. Louis at San Diego	1:00
San Francisco at Seattle	1:00

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Washington at Philadelphia	9:00
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3 (Fourth Weekend)

Cincinnati at Cleveland	1:00
Dallas at Seattle	1:00
Detroit at Green Bay	1:00
Houston at New Orleans	1:00
Kansas City at Buffalo	1:00
Los Angeles at Miami	4:00
New York Giants at St. Louis	1:00
New York Jets at San Francisco	1:00
Oakland at New England	1:00
Philadelphia at Atlanta	1:00
San Diego at Denver	2:00
Tampa Bay at Baltimore	2:00
Washington at Chicago	1:00

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4

Pittsburgh at Minnesota	8:00
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10 (Fifth Weekend)

Atlanta at New Orleans	1:00
Buffalo at New York Jets	1:00
Chicago at Minnesota	1:00
Dallas at New York Giants	1:00
Denver at Houston	1:00
Kansas City at Washington	1:00
Miami at Baltimore	4:00
New England at Detroit	1:00
Oakland at San Diego	1:00
Pittsburgh at Cleveland	1:00
St. Louis at Philadelphia	1:00
Seattle vs. Green Bay at Milw.	1:00
Tampa Bay at Cincinnati	1:00

MONDAY, OCTOBER 11

San Francisco at Los Angeles	6:00
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17 (Sixth Weekend)

Baltimore at Buffalo	1:00
Chicago at Los Angeles	1:00
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh	1:00
Cleveland at Atlanta	1:00
Dallas at St. Louis	3:00
Detroit at Washington	1:00
Houston at San Diego	1:00
Kansas City at Miami	1:00
New Orleans at San Francisco	1:00
New York Giants at Minnesota	1:00
Oakland at Denver	2:00
Philadelphia at Green Bay	1:00
Seattle at Tampa Bay	1:00

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18

New York Jets at New England	9:00
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23 (Seventh Weekend)

Atlanta at San Francisco	7:00
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24

Baltimore at New York Jets	1:00
Chicago at Dallas	1:00
Cincinnati at Houston	3:00
Denver at Kansas City	1:00
Detroit at Seattle	1:00
Green Bay at Oakland	1:00
Los Angeles at New Orleans	1:00
Miami at Tampa Bay	1:00
Minnesota at Philadelphia	1:00
New England at Buffalo	1:00
Pittsburgh at New York Giants	1:00
San Diego at Cleveland	1:00

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25

St. Louis at Washington	9:00
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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31 (Eighth Weekend)

Cleveland at Cincinnati	1:00
Dallas at Washington	4:00
Denver at Oakland	1:00
Green Bay at Detroit	1:00
Kansas City at Tampa Bay	1:00
Minnesota at Chicago	1:00
New England at Miami	1:00
New Orleans at Atlanta	1:00
New York Jets at Buffalo	1:00
Philadelphia at New York Giants	1:00
San Diego at Pittsburgh	1:00
San Francisco at St. Louis	1:00
Seattle at Los Angeles	1:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1

Houston at Baltimore	9:00
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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7 (Ninth Weekend)

Atlanta at Seattle	1:00
Baltimore at San Diego	1:00
Buffalo at New England	1:00
Cleveland at Houston	1:00
Detroit at Minnesota	3:00
Miami at New York Jets	1:00
New Orleans vs. Green Bay at Milw.	1:00
New York Giants at Dallas	1:00
Oakland at Chicago	1:00
Philadelphia at St. Louis	1:00
Pittsburgh at Kansas City	1:00
Tampa Bay at Denver	2:00
Washington at San Francisco	1:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8

Los Angeles at Cincinnati	9:00
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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14 (Tenth Weekend)

Chicago at Green Bay	1:00
Denver at San Diego	1:00
Detroit at New Orleans	1:00
Houston at Cincinnati	1:00
Kansas City at Oakland	1:00
Miami at Pittsburgh	4:00
New England at Baltimore	2:00
Philadelphia at Cleveland	1:00
St. Louis at Los Angeles	1:00
San Francisco at Atlanta	1:00
Seattle at Minnesota	1:00
Tampa Bay at New York Jets	1:00
Washington at New York Giants	1:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Buffalo at Dallas	8:00
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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21 (Eleventh Weekend)

Chicago at Detroit	1:00
Cincinnati at Kansas City	1:00
Cleveland at Tampa Bay	1:00
Dallas at Atlanta	1:00
Houston at Pittsburgh	1:00
Los Angeles at San Francisco	1:00
Minnesota vs. Green Bay at Milw.	1:00
New England at New York Jets	1:00
New Orleans at Seattle	1:00
New York Giants at Denver	2:00
Oakland at Philadelphia	1:00
San Diego at Buffalo	1:00
Washington at St. Louis	3:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22

Baltimore at Miami	9:00
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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25 (Thanksgiving Day)

Buffalo at Detroit	12:30
St. Louis at Dallas	2:30

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 28 (Twelfth Weekend)

Atlanta at Houston	1:00
Denver at New England	1:00
Green Bay at Chicago	1:00
Kansas City at San Diego	1:00
Miami at Cleveland	1:00
New Orleans at Los Angeles	1:00
New York Jets at Baltimore	2:00
Philadelphia at Washington	1:00
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati	3:00
Seattle at New York Giants	1:00
Tampa Bay at Oakland	1:00

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Minnesota at San Francisco	6:00
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4 (Thirteenth Weekend)

Atlanta at Los Angeles	12:30
Baltimore at St. Louis	12:00

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5

Buffalo at Miami	4:00
Chicago at Seattle	1:00
Dallas at Philadelphia	1:00
Detroit at New York Giants	1:00
Green Bay at Minnesota	1:00
Houston at Cleveland	1:00
Kansas City at Denver	2:00
New Orleans at New England	1:00
San Francisco at San Diego	1:00
Tampa Bay at Pittsburgh	1:00
Washington at New York Jets	1:00

MONDAY, DECEMBER 6

Cincinnati at Oakland	6:00
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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 (Fourteenth Weekend)

Los Angeles at Detroit	9:00
Minnesota at Miami	1:00
Pittsburgh at Houston	2:30

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12

Buffalo at Baltimore	2:00
Cincinnati at New York Jets	1:00
Cleveland at Kansas City	1:00
Denver at Chicago	1:00
Green Bay at Atlanta	1:00
New England at Tampa Bay	1:00
St. Louis at New York Giants	1:00
San Diego at Oakland	1:00
San Francisco at New Orleans	1:00
Seattle at Philadelphia	1:00
Washington at Dallas	3:00

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

(All times local. All games Sunday unless noted otherwise.)

ATLANTA FALCONS

Sept. 12	LOS ANGELES	1:00
Sept. 19	at Detroit	1:00
Sept. 26	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 3	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Oct. 10	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 17	CLEVELAND	1:00
Oct. 23	at San Francisco (Sat.)	7:00
Oct. 31	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Nov. 7	at Seattle	1:00
Nov. 14	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00
Nov. 21	DALLAS	1:00
Nov. 28	at Houston	1:00
Dec. 4	at Los Angeles (Sat.)	12:30
Dec. 12	GREEN BAY	1:00

CHICAGO BEARS

Sept. 12	DETROIT	1:00
Sept. 19	at San Francisco	1:00
Sept. 26	ATLANTA	1:00
Oct. 3	WASHINGTON	1:00
Oct. 10	at Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 17	at Los Angeles	1:00
Oct. 24	at Dallas	1:00
Oct. 31	MINNESOTA	1:00
Nov. 7	OAKLAND	1:00
Nov. 14	at Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 21	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 28	GREEN BAY	1:00
Dec. 5	at Seattle	1:00
Dec. 12	DENVER	1:00

DALLAS COWBOYS

Sept. 12	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Sept. 19	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 26	BALTIMORE	3:00
Oct. 3	at Seattle	1:00
Oct. 10	at New York Giants	1:00
Oct. 17	at St. Louis	3:00
Oct. 24	CHICAGO	1:00
Oct. 31	at Washington	4:00
Nov. 7	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Nov. 15	BUFFALO (Mon.)	8:00
Nov. 21	at Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 25	ST. LOUIS (Thanks.)	2:30
Dec. 5	at Philadelphia	1:00
Dec. 12	WASHINGTON	3:00

DETROIT LIONS

Sept. 12	at Chicago	1:00
Sept. 19	ATLANTA	1:00
Sept. 26	MINNESOTA	1:00
Oct. 3	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 10	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
Oct. 17	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 24	at Seattle	1:00
Oct. 31	GREEN BAY	1:00
Nov. 7	at Minnesota	3:00
Nov. 14	at New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 21	CHICAGO	1:00
Nov. 25	BUFFALO (Thanks.)	12:30
Dec. 5	at New York Giants	1:00
Dec. 11	LOS ANGELES (Sat.)	9:00

GREEN BAY PACKERS

Sept. 12	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00
Sept. 19	at St. Louis	1:00
Sept. 26	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 3	DETROIT	1:00
Oct. 10	SEATTLE (Milw.)	1:00
Oct. 17	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Oct. 24	at Oakland	1:00
Oct. 31	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 7	NEW ORLEANS (Milw.)	1:00
Nov. 14	CHICAGO	1:00
Nov. 21	MINNESOTA (Milw.)	1:00
Nov. 28	at Chicago	1:00
Dec. 5	at Minnesota	1:00
Dec. 12	at Atlanta	1:00

LOS ANGELES RAMS

Sept. 12	at Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 19	at Minnesota	3:00
Sept. 26	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Oct. 3	at Miami	4:00
Oct. 11	SAN FRANCISCO (Mon.)	6:00
Oct. 17	CHICAGO	1:00
Oct. 24	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 31	SEATTLE	1:00
Nov. 8	at Cincinnati (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 14	ST. LOUIS	1:00
Nov. 21	at San Francisco	1:00
Nov. 28	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Dec. 4	ATLANTA (Sat.)	12:30
Dec. 11	at Detroit (Sat.)	9:00

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Sept. 12	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 19	LOS ANGELES	3:00
Sept. 26	at Detroit	1:00
Oct. 4	PITTSBURGH (Mon.)	8:00
Oct. 10	CHICAGO	1:00
Oct. 17	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Oct. 24	at Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 31	at Chicago	1:00
Nov. 7	DETROIT	3:00
Nov. 14	SEATTLE	1:00
Nov. 21	vs. Green Bay (Milw.)	1:00
Nov. 29	at San Francisco (Mon.)	6:00
Dec. 5	GREEN BAY	1:00
Dec. 11	at Miami (Sat.)	1:00

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Sept. 12	MINNESOTA	1:00
Sept. 19	DALLAS	1:00
Sept. 26	at Kansas City	1:00
Oct. 3	HOUSTON	1:00
Oct. 10	ATLANTA	1:00
Oct. 17	at San Francisco	1:00
Oct. 24	LOS ANGELES	1:00
Oct. 31	at Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 7	vs. Green Bay (Milw.)	1:00
Nov. 14	DETROIT	1:00
Nov. 21	at Seattle	1:00
Nov. 28	at Los Angeles	1:00
Dec. 5	at New England	1:00
Dec. 12	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00

NEW YORK GIANTS

Sept. 12	at Washington	1:00
Sept. 19	at Philadelphia	1:00
Sept. 26	at Los Angeles	1:00
Oct. 3	at St. Louis	1:00
Oct. 10	DALLAS	1:00
Oct. 17	at Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 24	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Oct. 31	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Nov. 7	at Dallas	1:00
Nov. 14	WASHINGTON	1:00
Nov. 21	at Denver	2:00
Nov. 28	SEATTLE	1:00
Dec. 5	DETROIT	1:00
Dec. 12	ST. LOUIS	1:00

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Sept. 12	at Dallas	1:00
Sept. 19	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Sept. 27	WASHINGTON (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 3	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 10	ST. LOUIS	1:00
Oct. 17	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 24	MINNESOTA	1:00
Oct. 31	at New York Giants	1:00
Nov. 7	at St. Louis	1:00
Nov. 14	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 21	OAKLAND	1:00
Nov. 28	at Washington	1:00
Dec. 5	DALLAS	1:00
Dec. 12	SEATTLE	1:00

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Sept. 12	at Green Bay	1:00
Sept. 19	CHICAGO	1:00
Sept. 26	at Seattle	1:00
Oct. 3	NEW YORK JETS	1:00
Oct. 11	at Los Angeles (Mon.)	6:00
Oct. 17	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Oct. 23	ATLANTA (Sat.)	7:00
Oct. 31	at St. Louis	1:00
Nov. 7	WASHINGTON	1:00
Nov. 14	at Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 21	LOS ANGELES	1:00
Nov. 29	MINNESOTA (Mon.)	6:00
Dec. 5	at San Diego	1:00
Dec. 12	at New Orleans	1:00

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Sept. 12	ST. LOUIS	1:00
Sept. 19	at Washington	1:00
Sept. 26	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00
Oct. 3	DALLAS	1:00
Oct. 10	vs. Green Bay (Milw.)	1:00
Oct. 17	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 24	DETROIT	1:00
Oct. 31	at Los Angeles	1:00
Nov. 7	ATLANTA	1:00
Nov. 14	at Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 21	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Nov. 28	at New York Giants	1:00
Dec. 5	CHICAGO	1:00
Dec. 12	at Philadelphia	1:00

ST. LOUIS CARDINALS

Sept. 12	at Seattle	1:00
Sept. 19	GREEN BAY	1:00
Sept. 26	at San Diego	1:00
Oct. 3	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Oct. 10	at Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 17	DALLAS	3:00
Oct. 25	at Washington (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 31	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00
Nov. 7	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Nov. 14	at Los Angeles	1:00
Nov. 21	WASHINGTON	3:00
Nov. 25	at Dallas (Thanks.)	2:30
Dec. 4	BALTIMORE (Sat.)	12:00
Dec. 12	at New York Giants	1:00

WASHINGTON REDSKINS

Sept. 12	NEW YORK GIANTS	1:00
Sept. 19	SEATTLE	1:00
Sept. 27	at Philadelphia (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 3	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 10	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Oct. 17	DETROIT	1:00
Oct. 25	ST. LOUIS (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 31	DALLAS	4:00
Nov. 7	at San Francisco	1:00
Nov. 28	at New York Giants	1:00
Nov. 21	at St. Louis	3:00
Nov. 28	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Dec. 5	at New York Jets	1:00
Dec. 12	at Dallas	3:00



AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

(All times local. All games Sunday unless noted otherwise.)

BALTIMORE COLTS

Sept. 12	at New England	1:00
Sept. 19	CINCINNATI	2:00
Sept. 26	at Dallas	3:00
Oct. 3	TAMPA BAY	2:00
Oct. 10	MIAMI	4:00
Oct. 17	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 24	at New York Jets	1:00
Nov. 1	HOUSTON (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 7	at San Diego	1:00
Nov. 14	NEW ENGLAND	2:00
Nov. 22	at Miami (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 28	NEW YORK JETS	2:00
Dec. 4	at St. Louis (Sat.)	12:00
Dec. 12	BUFFALO	2:00

BUFFALO BILLS

Sept. 13	MIAMI (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 19	HOUSTON	1:00
Sept. 26	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 3	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Oct. 10	at New York Jets	1:00
Oct. 17	BALTIMORE	1:00
Oct. 24	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
Oct. 31	NEW YORK JETS	1:00
Nov. 7	at New England	1:00
Nov. 15	at Dallas (Mon.)	8:00
Nov. 21	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Nov. 25	at Detroit (Thanks.)	12:30
Dec. 5	at Miami	4:00
Dec. 12	at Baltimore	2:00

CINCINNATI BENGALS

Sept. 12	DENVER	1:00
Sept. 19	at Baltimore	2:00
Sept. 26	GREEN BAY	1:00
Oct. 3	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 10	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Oct. 17	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 24	at Houston	3:00
Oct. 31	CLEVELAND	1:00
Nov. 8	LOS ANGELES (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 14	HOUSTON	1:00
Nov. 21	at Kansas City	1:00
Nov. 28	PITTSBURGH	4:00
Dec. 6	at Oakland (Mon.)	6:00
Dec. 12	at New York Jets	1:00

CLEVELAND BROWNS

Sept. 12	NEW YORK JETS	1:00
Sept. 19	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 26	at Denver	2:00
Oct. 3	CINCINNATI	1:00
Oct. 10	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Oct. 17	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 24	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Oct. 31	at Cincinnati	1:00
Nov. 7	at Houston	1:00
Nov. 14	PHILADELPHIA	1:00
Nov. 21	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 28	MIAMI	1:00
Dec. 5	HOUSTON	1:00
Dec. 12	at Kansas City	1:00

DENVER BRONCOS

Sept. 12	at Cincinnati	1:00
Sept. 19	NEW YORK JETS	2:00
Sept. 26	CLEVELAND	2:00
Oct. 3	SAN DIEGO	2:00
Oct. 10	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 17	OAKLAND	2:00
Oct. 24	at Kansas City	1:00
Oct. 31	at Oakland	1:00
Nov. 7	TAMPA BAY	2:00
Nov. 14	at San Diego	1:00
Nov. 21	NEW YORK GIANTS	2:00
Nov. 28	at New England	1:00
Dec. 5	KANSAS CITY	2:00
Dec. 12	at Chicago	1:00

HOUSTON OILERS

Sept. 12	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Sept. 19	at Buffalo	1:00
Sept. 26	OAKLAND	1:00
Oct. 3	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 10	DENVER	1:00
Oct. 17	at San Diego	1:00
Oct. 24	CINCINNATI	3:00
Nov. 1	at Baltimore (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 7	CLEVELAND	1:00
Nov. 14	at Cincinnati	1:00
Nov. 21	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 28	ATLANTA	1:00
Dec. 5	at Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 11	PITTSBURGH (Sat.)	2:30

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Sept. 12	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Sept. 20	OAKLAND (Mon.)	8:00
Sept. 26	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Oct. 3	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 10	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 17	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 24	DENVER	1:00
Oct. 31	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 7	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Nov. 14	at Oakland	1:00
Nov. 21	CINCINNATI	1:00
Nov. 28	at San Diego	1:00
Dec. 5	at Denver	2:00
Dec. 12	CLEVELAND	1:00

MIAMI DOLPHINS

Sept. 13	at Buffalo (Mon.)	9:00
Sept. 19	at New England	1:00
Sept. 26	NEW YORK JETS	1:00
Oct. 3	LOS ANGELES	4:00
Oct. 10	at Baltimore	4:00
Oct. 17	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Oct. 24	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 31	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
Nov. 7	at New York Jets	1:00
Nov. 14	at Pittsburgh	4:00
Nov. 22	BALTIMORE (Mon.)	9:00
Nov. 28	at Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 5	BUFFALO	4:00
Dec. 11	MINNESOTA (Sat.)	1:00

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Sept. 12	BALTIMORE	1:00
Sept. 19	MIAMI	1:00
Sept. 26	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 3	OAKLAND	1:00
Oct. 10	at Detroit	1:00
Oct. 18	NEW YORK JETS (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 24	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 31	at Miami	1:00
Nov. 7	BUFFALO	1:00
Nov. 14	at Baltimore	2:00
Nov. 21	at New York Jets	1:00
Nov. 28	DENVER	1:00
Dec. 5	NEW ORLEANS	1:00
Dec. 12	at Tampa Bay	1:00

NEW YORK JETS

Sept. 12	at Cleveland	1:00
Sept. 19	at Denver	2:00
Sept. 26	at Miami	1:00
Oct. 3	at San Francisco	1:00
Oct. 10	BUFFALO	1:00
Oct. 18	at New England (Mon.)	9:00
Oct. 24	BALTIMORE	1:00
Oct. 31	at Buffalo	1:00
Nov. 7	MIAMI	1:00
Nov. 14	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Nov. 21	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
Nov. 28	at Baltimore	2:00
Dec. 5	WASHINGTON	1:00
Dec. 12	CINCINNATI	1:00

OAKLAND RAIDERS

Sept. 12	PITTSBURGH	1:00
Sept. 20	at Kansas City (Mon.)	8:00
Sept. 26	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 3	at New England	1:00
Oct. 10	at San Diego	1:00
Oct. 17	at Denver	2:00
Oct. 24	GREEN BAY	1:00
Oct. 31	DENVER	1:00
Nov. 7	at Chicago	1:00
Nov. 14	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Nov. 21	at Philadelphia	1:00
Nov. 28	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Dec. 6	CINCINNATI (Mon.)	6:00
Dec. 12	SAN DIEGO	1:00

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Sept. 12	at Oakland	1:00
Sept. 19	CLEVELAND	1:00
Sept. 26	NEW ENGLAND	1:00
Oct. 4	at Minnesota (Mon.)	8:00
Oct. 10	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 17	CINCINNATI	1:00
Oct. 24	at New York Giants	1:00
Oct. 31	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Nov. 7	at Kansas City	1:00
Nov. 14	MIAMI	4:00
Nov. 21	HOUSTON	1:00
Nov. 28	at Cincinnati	4:00
Dec. 5	TAMPA BAY	1:00
Dec. 11	at Houston (Sat.)	2:30

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

Sept. 12	at Kansas City	1:00
Sept. 19	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 26	ST. LOUIS	1:00
Oct. 3	at Denver	2:00
Oct. 10	OAKLAND	1:00
Oct. 17	HOUSTON	1:00
Oct. 24	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 31	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 7	BALTIMORE	1:00
Nov. 14	DENVER	1:00
Nov. 21	at Buffalo	1:00
Nov. 28	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Dec. 5	SAN FRANCISCO	1:00
Dec. 12	at Oakland	1:00

TAMPA BAY BUCCANERS

Sept. 12	at Houston	1:00
Sept. 19	SAN DIEGO	1:00
Sept. 26	BUFFALO	1:00
Oct. 3	at Baltimore	2:00
Oct. 10	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 17	SEATTLE	1:00
Oct. 24	MIAMI	1:00
Oct. 31	KANSAS CITY	1:00
Nov. 7	at Denver	2:00
Nov. 14	at New York Jets	1:00
Nov. 21	CLEVELAND	1:00
Nov. 28	at Oakland	1:00
Dec. 5	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Dec. 12	NEW ENGLAND	1:00



INTER- CONFERENCE

(Sunday unless noted; all times local)

Sept. 26—Baltimore at Dallas.....	1:00
Green Bay at Cincinnati.....	1:00
New Orleans at Kansas City.....	1:00
St. Louis at San Diego.....	1:00
Oct. 3—Houston at New Orleans.....	1:00
Los Angeles at Miami.....	4:00
New York Jets at San Francisco.....	1:00
Oct. 4—(Mon.) Pittsburgh at Minnesota.....	8:00
Oct. 10—Kansas City at Washington.....	1:00
New England at Detroit.....	1:00
Oct. 17—Cleveland at Atlanta.....	1:00
Seattle at Tampa Bay.....	1:00
Oct. 24—Green Bay at Oakland.....	1:00
Pittsburgh at New York Giants.....	1:00
Nov. 7—Oakland at Chicago.....	1:00
Nov. 8—(Mon.) Los Angeles at Cincinnati.....	9:00
Nov. 14—Philadelphia at Cleveland.....	1:00
Nov. 15—(Mon.) Buffalo at Dallas.....	8:00
Nov. 21—New York Giants at Denver.....	2:00
Oakland at Philadelphia.....	1:00
Nov. 25—(Thanks.) Buffalo at Detroit.....	12:30
Nov. 28—Atlanta at Houston.....	1:00
Dec. 4—(Sat.) Baltimore at St. Louis.....	12:00
Dec. 5—New Orleans at New England.....	1:00
San Francisco at San Diego.....	1:00
Washington at New York Jets.....	1:00
Dec. 11—(Sat.) Minnesota at Miami.....	1:00
Dec. 12—Denver at Chicago.....	1:00

POSTSEASON GAMES

Saturday, Dec. 18—AFC and NFC Divisional Playoffs (NBC and CBS)	
Sunday, Dec. 19—AFC and NFC Divisional Playoffs (NBC and CBS)	
Sunday, Dec. 26—AFC Championship Game (NBC) NFC Championship Game (CBS)	
Sunday, Jan. 9—Super Bowl XI at Rose Bowl, Pasadena (NBC)	
Monday, Jan. 17—AFC-NFC Pro Bowl at Seattle (night, ABC)	

MONDAY NIGHT GAMES

(All times local)

Sept. 13—Miami at Buffalo.....	9:00
Sept. 20—Oakland at Kansas City.....	8:00
Sept. 27—Washington at Philadelphia.....	9:00
Oct. 4—Pittsburgh at Minnesota.....	8:00
Oct. 11—San Francisco at Los Angeles.....	6:00
Oct. 18—New York Jets at New England.....	9:00
Oct. 25—St. Louis at Washington.....	9:00
Nov. 1—Houston at Baltimore.....	9:00
Nov. 8—Los Angeles at Cincinnati.....	9:00
Nov. 15—Buffalo at Dallas.....	8:00
Nov. 22—Baltimore at Miami.....	9:00
Nov. 29—Minnesota at San Francisco.....	6:00
Dec. 6—Cincinnati at Oakland.....	6:00

(Fourteenth game of ABC nationally televised series will be Los Angeles at Detroit, Saturday night, Dec. 11, 9:00 local time)

RULES OF SELECTING SITES FOR 1976 PLAYOFFS

The four teams which qualify for the playoffs in each conference are the three division winners, plus the 4th best finisher, won/lost-wise. (The 4th best finisher is popularly called the wild card team.)

The two division winners with the highest won/lost percentages will be the home teams for the first playoff round in each conference.

The division winner with the best won/lost record will host the wild card, while the division winner with the second best won/lost mark will host the third best division winner.

If the wild card winner is from the same division as the team with the conference's best won/lost mark, then the opponents are switched, since the policy is that the wild card team should not meet the champion of its own division in the first round.

For the conference championship, the surviving division winner with the highest won/lost percentage will be the home team. (In no case will the wild card team be the home team in either the divisional playoff round or the conference championship.)

In case of ties, the current formula for tie-breaking will prevail.

NOTE: Alternatives in the formula are designed to accommodate the rule that the 4th best finisher is not permitted to host a first round nor conference championship game.



ROSTER OF OFFICIALS

ART McNALLY, Supervisor JACK READER, Assistant Supervisor
NICK SKORICH, Assistant Supervisor

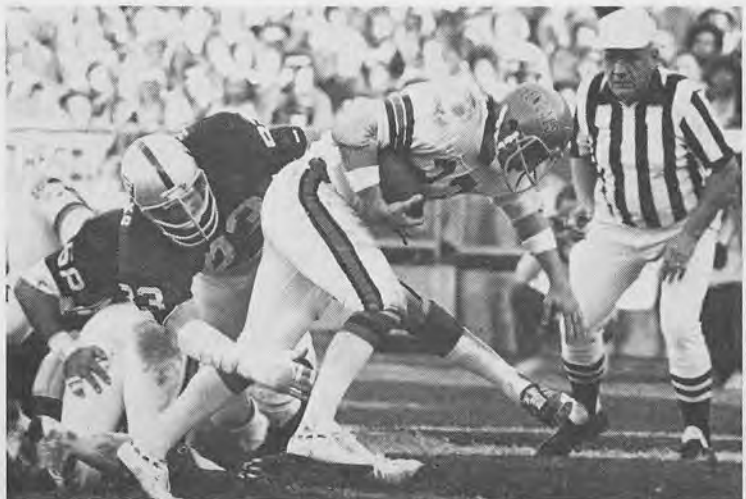
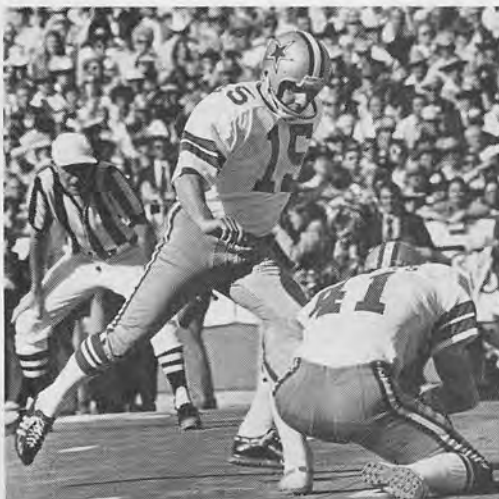
No.	Name	College/University	Yr. Pro	Hometown	Pos.*
3	PORTER, Don.....	E. L.A. College.....	1.....	Oklahoma City.....	BJ
	Executive director, amateur softball association				
4	KINGZETT, Bill.....	Hiram.....	2.....	Lyndhurst, Ohio.....	FJ
	Athletic coordinator				
5	DOUGLAS, Ray.....	Univ. of Baltimore.....	9.....	Baltimore, Md.....	BJ
	Supervisor & inventory control manager				
6	ULMAN, Bernie.....	Maryland.....	14.....	Bel Air, Md.....	R
	Owner, sporting goods store				
7	BELL, Tom.....	Kentucky.....	15.....	Lexington, Ky.....	R
	Attorney-at-law				
8	KLEMMER, Grover.....	California.....	14.....	San Francisco, Calif.....	BJ
	Teacher, dept. chairman, athletic director, San Francisco schools				
9	MARKBREIT, Jerry.....	Illinois.....	1.....	Skokie, Ill.....	LJ
	Regional sales mgr., advertising				
10	SABATO, Al.....	Cincinnati.....	17.....	Cincinnati, Ohio.....	HL
	Director, school food services				
11	JACOB, Vince.....	None.....	2.....	Verona, Pa.....	LJ
	Wireman, special apparatus				
12	DREITH, Ben.....	Colorado St. U.....	17.....	Denver, Colo.....	R
	High school teacher				
14	BARTH, Gene.....	St. Louis U.....	6.....	Florissant, Mo.....	R
	President, oil company				
15	MORCROFT, Ralph.....	Ohio State.....	16.....	Hollywood, Fla.....	U
	Baseball farm system coordinator				
16	CATHCART, Royal.....	U. of California.....	6.....	Irvine, Calif.....	LJ
	Regional sales manager, Santa Barbara medical products company (Former NFL player)				
17	BERGMAN, Jerry.....	Duquesne.....	11.....	Pittsburgh, Pa.....	HL
	Product Sales manager				
18	LEWIS, Bob.....	None.....	1.....	San Antonio.....	FJ
	Operations chief, air force base				
19	HENSLEY, Tom.....	Tennessee.....	10.....	Knoxville, Tenn.....	U
	Transportation sales				
20	SINKOVITZ, Frank.....	Duke.....	19.....	Hershey, Pa.....	U
	Safety specialist (Former NFL player)				
21	SWEARINGEN, Fred.....	Ohio U.....	17.....	Carlsbad, Calif.....	FJ
	Investment broker				
22	TREPINSKI, Paul.....	Toledo.....	14.....	Toldeo, Ohio.....	U
	Real estate salesman				
23	TERZIAN, Armen.....	So. California.....	16.....	San Francisco, Calif.....	FJ
	Director of physical education, San Francisco schools				
24	ALFORD, Bruce.....	TCU.....	17.....	Fort Worth, Tex.....	LJ
	Owner, building materials company (Former NFL player)				
25	KELLEHER, Tom.....	Holy Cross.....	17.....	Miami, Fla.....	BJ
	Vice president, marketing division				
26	MARION, Ed.....	Pennsylvania.....	17.....	Portland, Maine.....	HL
	Vice president, insurance company				
27	CONWAY, Al.....	Army.....	8.....	Kansas City, Mo.....	U
	Ass't. vice president, paint and chemical company				
28	WEDGE, Don.....	Ohio Wesleyan.....	5.....	Troy, Ohio.....	R
	General sales manager				

No.	Name	College/University	Yr. Pro	Hometown	Pos.*
29	JAVIE, Stan.....	Georgetown.....	26.....	Philadelphia, Pa.....	BJ
	Vice president, paint company				
30	MURPHY, George.....	So. California.....	17.....	Coronado, Calif.....	HL
	Industrial consultant				
31	DOLACK, Dick.....	Ferris State.....	11.....	Muskegon, Mich.....	FJ
	Chief Pharmacist				
32	TUNNEY, Jim.....	Occidental.....	17.....	Los Angeles, Calif.....	R
	Ass't Superintendent Bellflower, Calif., schools				
33	HOLST, Art.....	Knox.....	13.....	Peoria, Ill.....	LJ
	President-owner, promotivation company, professional speaker				
34	GRAF, Fritz.....	Western Reserve.....	17.....	Akron, Ohio.....	FJ
	Area manager, medical and hospital equipment company				
35	MILES, Leo.....	Virginia.....	8.....	Washington, D.C.....	HL
	University athletic director (Former NFL player)				
36	VETERI, Tony.....	None.....	16.....	Mt. Vernon, N.Y.....	HL
	Special sales representative				
37	TOLER, Burl.....	San Francisco.....	12.....	San Francisco, Calif.....	HL
	Assoc. director of adult and community education				
38	SWANSON, Bill.....	Lake Forest.....	13.....	Libertyville, Ill.....	LJ
	Banking vice president in marketing				
39	FETTE, Jack.....	None.....	12.....	Kansas City, Mo.....	LJ
	Sales division mgr., sporting goods company				
40	HAGGERTY, Pat.....	Colorado State.....	12.....	Denver, Colo.....	R
	Teacher and coach, College Denver schools				
41	REED, Charles.....	Whittier.....	2.....	Los Angeles, Calif.....	BJ
	Recreation director				
42	HAMILTON, Dave.....	Utah.....	2.....	Atascadero, Calif.....	U
	Assistant to medical director				
43	CASHION, Red.....	Texas A&M.....	5.....	Bryan, Tex.....	R
	Chairman of the Board, insurance company				
44	PETERS, Walt.....	Indiana State.....	9.....	King of Prussia, Pa.....	HL
	Insurance agent				
45	FOUCH, John.....	So. California.....	11.....	Redlands, Calif.....	BJ
	Sales manager, distributing company				
46	HEBERLING, Chuck.....	Washington.....	12.....	Pittsburgh, Pa.....	R
	Sales counselor, & Jefferson consumer products company				
47	VANDEMBERG, Ralph.....	Cincinnati.....	17.....	Cincinnati, Ohio.....	LJ
	Operations manager, consumer goods company				
48	McCARTER, Gordon.....	Western Reserve.....	10.....	Cleveland, Ohio.....	R
	University registrar				
49	LOOK, Dean.....	Michigan State.....	5.....	Lansing, Mich.....	LJ
	Insurance sales				
50	KRAMER, Tony.....	Dayton.....	2.....	Centerville, Ohio.....	U
	Transportation area sales manager				
51	PALAZZI, Lou.....	Penn State.....	25.....	Scranton, Pa.....	U
	Landscape architect (Former NFL player)				
52	TOMPKINS, Ben.....	Texas.....	6.....	Fort Worth, Tex.....	BJ
	Attorney				
53	REYNOLDS, Bill.....	West Chester State.....	2.....	Springfield, Pa.....	LJ
	High school teacher and coach				

No.	Name	College/University	Yr. Pro	Hometown	Pos.*
54	JOHNSON, Jack	Pacific Lutheran	1	Tacoma, Wash.	LJ
	Athletic-recreation co-ordinator				
55	MUSSER, Charley	North Carolina St.	12	Naperville, Ill.	FJ
	Sales manager, oil company				
57	CONNELL, Joe	Pittsburgh	25	Pittsburgh, Pa.	U
	District sales manager, steel company				
58	BAUR, Bob	Ohio U.	14	Athens, Ohio	LJ
	Insurance agent				
59	BEEKS, Bob	Lincoln	9	St. Louis, Mo.	LJ
	Police community relations officer				
60	JORGENSEN, Dick	Wisconsin	9	Champaign, Ill.	R
	Bank vice president				
61	STEFFEN, John	Minnesota	9	Miami, Fla.	BJ
	Airline director of engineering administration				
62	HART, Gerry	Kansas State	9	Birmingham, Mich.	U
	General manager, sales, steel company				
63	HAGERTY, Ligouri	Syracuse	1	Glen Burnie, Md.	BJ
	Mgr., sporting goods company				
64	PARRY, Dave	Wabash	2	Michigan City, Ind.	BJ
	High school athletic director				
65	KRAGSETH, Norm	Northwestern	3	Minneapolis, Minn.	HL
	Teacher and coach				
66	HAWK, Dave	SMU	5	Corsicana, Tex.	HL
	Vice president, manufacturing company				
67	KECK, John	Cornell College	5	Des Moines, Iowa	U
	Petroleum distributor				
68	ROSS, Bill	Missouri	4	Kansas City, Mo.	U
	Collegiate assistant professor				
70	SEEMAN, Jerry	Winona State	2	Fridley, Minn.	HL
	Public school administrator				
71	FREDERIC, Bob	Colorado	9	Denver, Colo.	R
	Owner, printing and lithographing company				
72	LEPORE, Cal	Alabama	11	Chicago, Ill.	R
	Youth services officer				
73	KNIGHT, Pat	Southern Methodist	4	San Antonio, Tex.	BJ
	General manager, lumber company (Former NFL player)				
74	DODEZ, Ray	Wooster	9	Columbus, Ohio	HL
	Telephone company executive				
75	WYANT, Fred	West Virginia	11	Star City, W. Va.	R
	Insurance and investment broker				

No.	Name	College/University	Yr. Pro	Hometown	Pos.*
76	MERRIFIELD, Ed	Missouri	2	Leawood, Kans.	FJ
	Machinery territorial manager				
77	ORR, Don	Vanderbilt	6	Nashville, Tenn.	LJ
	Executive vice president, machine company				
78	DEMMAS, Art	Vanderbilt	9	Nashville, Tenn.	U
	Investment and finance planning				
79	SONNENBERG, Ray	St. Louis U.	10	St. Louis, Mo.	HL
	Bank marketing vice president				
80	RICE, Bob	Denison	8	Cleveland, Ohio	BJ
	Teacher and coach				
81	SILVA, Fred	San Jose State	10	San Jose, Calif.	R
	Sales manager, consumer sales company				
82	MALLETTE, Pat	Nebraska	8	Blair, Neb.	FJ
	Vocational director, Blair schools				
83	O'BRIEN, Bill	Indiana	10	Carbondale, Ill.	FJ
	University department chairman-professor				
84	WORTMAN, Bob	Findlay	11	Findlay, Ohio	FJ
	Owner, insurance agency				
85	GLOVER, Frank	Morris Brown	5	Atlanta, Ga.	HL
	Personnel specialist				
86	COLE, Jimmy	Memphis State	7	Germantown, Tenn.	FJ
	Land development				
87	FERGUSON, Richard	West Virginia	3	San Jose, Calif.	FJ
	Assistant commissioner, high school athletics				
88	HARDER, Pat	Wisconsin	11	Milwaukee, Wisc.	U
	Salesman (Former NFL player)				
89	WELLS, Gordon	Occidental	5	Huntington Beach, Calif.	U
	Teacher, track and cross-country coach				
90	MACE, Gil	Westminster	3	Library, Pa.	HL
	Sales manager				
91	STANLEY, Bill	Univ. of Redlands	3	Whittier, Calif.	FJ
	College athletic director				
92	POOLE, James	San Diego State	2	Westminster, Calif.	BJ
	College physical education teacher				
93	VAUGHAN, Jack	Mississippi State	1	Ponchatonla, La.	FJ
	Owner, distributing company				
94	MARSHALL, Vern	Linfield College	1	Portland, Ore.	BJ
	Counseling co-ordinator				
95	McELWEE, Bob	U.S. Naval Academy	1	Haddonfield, N.J.	LJ
	President, construction company				

*HL—Head Linesman BJ—Back Judge R—Referee FJ—Field Judge LJ—Line Judge U—Umpire



"Rules modernize the game"

Despite the fact that there are several new rules for 1976, the officials still will be calling a game designed to favor the defense. (See Bob Oates' story on page 20.) Nothing has been done to experiment with an emphasis on offense, and presumably we'll continue to watch the defenses dominate the game. When they do, ball control offense will continue to be the style of the day. Any coach will tell you that a strong defensive team insists on a ball control offense, lest the game become so wide open that the defense is wasting all its well-laid plans for the game's defensive strategy.

The new rules announced at publication time were these:

- (1) The referee will toss the coin three minutes before kickoff, and his microphone will carry the coin-toss dialogue to the fans in the stadium. (Previously, the coin toss was 30 minutes before kickoff.)
- (2) There will be 30-second time clocks in each end zone area (not unlike

professional basketball's time clocks) so that the fans, the officials and the quarterback can see how long it takes to put the ball in play. The time clocks will be official.

- (3) There will be no more paint-on stripes on the balls used at night. The manufacturer has been asked to come up with some other means of helping the night fans to see the official game ball.
- (4) All games must be played to conclusion. In the past, games have ended prematurely when the field has been over-run by fans with the game's outcome no longer in doubt. Now, however, all final scores are important as possible tie-breakers at season's end. (Now, if a team seems to be pouring it on, it may be only to protect its chances of coming out on the better end of a tie-breaking procedure, weeks later.)
- (5) When a defensive team fouls on an aborted or unsuccessful kick try, the offense may take the yardage on the next try or on the ensuing kickoff, thus eliminating "cheap shots" by the defense. On successful tries, yardage on defensive fouls will be assessed on the ensuing kickoff.
- (6) Defensive players are prohibited from using a hand or hands on a teammate to gain leverage in an attempt to block a kick. This broadens the rule which already prohibits the defense from "stacking" players or lifting players in an attempt to block the kick.

In 1975, the NFL's referees all had a chance to talk to the house. All went through most of the season wired for sound, with their condensed explanations of the penalties being carried by FM packs (attached to their belts) to the public address mixer, to the press box public address and to the radio and TV audiences.

Excepting for the above-mentioned failure to rescue the hamstring offenses, NFL rules and policies have been modernizing the game constantly since Commissioner Pete Rozelle took office 16 years ago. But until an effort is made to accentuate the offense, the annual NFL stats will continue to fall far short of most NFL all-time highs.

There'll be a name prominently missing from this year's roster of game officials. The NFL's senior referee, Norm Schacter, has retired from active duty on the field after 22 seasons.

He has made some remarkable contributions. His comeback, after a crippling injury on the field at Minnesota a few seasons ago, was a medical miracle, created by Norm's incredible dedication to therapy. He has been called by his most competent confreres "the most learned of us." His knowledge of NFL rules has been "as if he wrote the book." Well, he did. Norm, for years, has been the author and up-dater of the NFL rule book.

He was the first Super Bowl referee, and the first to referee three Super Bowls. In fact, his last game wearing his familiar #56 was Super Bowl X.

Norm is not leaving the NFL. In addition to his duties as an area superintendent for the Los Angeles City Schools, he will be an NFL observer in some press box each Sunday, making reports to the league on the officiating.

And, presumably, whenever the owners decide another rule is to be changed, Norm will revise the book for them as usual, with all the "approved rulings" and complications that can arise when a new rule is introduced.

For 22 years, Dr. Norman Schacter has epitomized that quality of man which has kept the NFL an enterprise of integrity.



***“Introducing
the third team”***

The '75 Official Statistics

RUSHING

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	Att	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Simpson, O.J., Buff.	329	1817	5.5	88t	16
Harris, Franco, Pitt.	262	1246	4.8	36	10
Mitchell, Lydell, Balt.	289	1193	4.1	70t	11
Pruitt, Greg, Clev.	217	1067	4.9	50	8
Riggins, John, N.Y.J.	238	1005	4.2	42	8
Morris, Eugene, Mia.	219	875	4.0	49	4
Braxton, Jim, Buff.	186	823	4.4	29	9
Coleman, Ronnie, Hou.	175	790	4.5	46t	5
Keyworth, Jon, Den.	182	725	4.0	34	3
Nottingham, Don, Mia.	168	718	4.3	56	12

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	Att	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Otis, Jim, St.L.	269	1076	4.0	30	5
Foreman, Chuck, Minn.	280	1070	3.8	31t	13
Hampton, Dave, Atl.	250	1002	4.0	22	5
Newhouse, Robert, Dall.	209	930	4.4	29	2
Thomas, Mike, Wash.	235	919	3.9	34	4
McCutcheon, Lawrence, L.A.	213	911	4.3	43t	2
Metcalfe, Terry, St.L.	165	816	4.9	52t	9

t = Touchdown

Leader based on most yards gained

1975 RUSHING - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Att	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Buffalo	588	2,974	5.1	88t	26
Pittsburgh	581	2,633	4.5	36	22
Oakland	643	2,573	4.0	66	28
Miami	594	2,500	4.2	56	26
Baltimore	536	2,217	4.1	70t	28
New York Jets	501	2,079	4.1	42	15
Houston	526	2,068	3.9	46t	14
Denver	490	1,993	4.1	34	9
Cleveland	440	1,850	4.2	50	14
Kansas City	487	1,847	3.8	65	14
New England	472	1,845	3.9	66t	14
Cincinnati	499	1,819	3.6	29	20
San Diego	434	1,801	4.1	48t	14
Conference Total	6,791	28,199	---	88t	244
Conference Average	522.4	2,169.2	4.2	--	18.8

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Att	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Dallas	571	2,432	4.3	32	17
St. Louis	555	2,402	4.3	57t	19
Los Angeles	585	2,371	4.1	43t	18
Detroit	532	2,147	4.0	46t	10
Minnesota	556	2,094	3.8	31t	18
Atlanta	465	1,794	3.9	26t	12
Washington	444	1,752	3.9	43	9
Philadelphia	461	1,702	3.7	51	3
Chicago	441	1,653	3.7	54t	11
New Orleans	463	1,642	3.5	22	9
New York Giants	482	1,627	3.4	46t	17
San Francisco	422	1,598	3.8	52	12
Green Bay	431	1,547	3.6	29	14
Conference Total	6,408	24,761	---	57t	169
Conference Average	492.9	1,904.7	3.9	--	13.0
League Total	13,199	52,960	---	88t	413
League Average	507.7	2,036.9	4.0	--	15.9

INTERCEPTIONS

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Blount, Mel, Pitt.	11	121	11.0	47	0
White, Stan, Balt.	8	135	16.9	32	1
Harrison, Dwight, Buff.	8	99	12.4	40	0
Thomas, Emmitt, K.C.	6	119	19.8	36	0
Fletcher, Chris, S.D.	6	100	16.7	45	0
Thomas, Alonzo, Oak.	6	86	14.3	48	0
Greene, Tony, Buff.	6	81	13.5	37	0
Riley, Ken, Cin.	6	76	12.7	30t	1
Scott, Jake, Mia.	6	60	10.0	38	0
Phillips, Charles, Oak.	6	45	7.5	23	0
Moore, Zeke, Hou.	5	137	27.4	74	0

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Krause, Paul, Minn.	10	201	20.1	81	0
Lawrence, Rolland, Atl.	9	163	18.1	87t	1
Thompson, Norm, St.L.	7	141	20.1	61t	1
Bryant, Bobby, Minn.	6	111	18.5	41	0
Smith, Perry, G.B.	6	97	16.2	61	0
Simpson, Bill, L.A.	6	90	15.0	29	0
Jordan, Lee Roy, Dall.	6	80	13.3	38	0
Wehrli, Roger, St.L.	6	31	5.2	31	0

t = Touchdown

L = Lateral

Leader based on most interceptions

1975 INTERCEPTIONS - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Oakland	35	450	12.9	57	0
Baltimore	29	493	17.0	50	4
Pittsburgh	27	421	15.6	65	0
Buffalo	25	376	15.0	58	2
Houston	24	425	17.7	74	0
Cincinnati	22	410	18.6	52t	2
Miami	21	183	8.7	38	0
Kansas City	20	388	19.4	61	0
San Diego	20	223	11.2	45	0
Denver	16	293	18.3	49	1
New York Jets	15	98	6.5	18	0
New England	13	165	12.7	54	1
Cleveland	10	107	10.7	56t	1
Conference Total	277	4,032	---	74	11
Conference Average	21.3	310.2	14.6	--	0.8

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Minnesota	28	404	14.4	81	0
Philadelphia	26	344	13.2	89t	2
Dallas	25	346	13.8	38	3
Atlanta	25	342	13.7	87t	2
Los Angeles	22	372	16.9	76t	2
St. Louis	22	249	11.3	61t	1
Detroit	20	315	15.8	67t	1
Washington	18	335	18.6	57	0
New Orleans	16	305	19.1	46	0
New York Giants	16	117	7.3	38	0
Green Bay	14	174	12.4	61	0
Chicago	13	241	18.5	76t	2
San Francisco	11	138	12.5	37t	1
Conference Total	256	3,682	---	89t	14
Conference Average	19.7	283.2	14.4	--	1.1
League Total	533	7,714	---	89t	25
League Average	20.5	296.7	14.5	--	1.0

PASSING

AFC INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS

	Att	Comp	Pct Comp	Yards	Avg Gain	TD	Pct TD	Long	Int	Pct Int	Rating Points
Anderson, Ken, Cin.	377	228	60.5	3169	8.41	21	5.6	55	11	2.9	94.1
Dawson, Len, K.C.	140	93	66.4	1095	7.82	5	3.6	51	4	2.9	89.9
Jones, Bert, Balt.	344	203	59.0	2483	7.22	18	5.2	90t	8	2.3	89.1
Bradshaw, Terry, Pitt.	286	165	57.7	2055	7.19	18	6.3	59	9	3.1	88.2

NFC INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS

	Att	Comp	Pct Comp	Yards	Avg Gain	TD	Pct TD	Long	Int	Pct Int	Rating Points
Tarkenton, Fran, Minn.	425	273	64.2	2994	7.04	25	5.9	46	13	3.1	91.7
Staubach, Roger, Dall.	348	198	56.9	2666	7.66	17	4.9	62	16	4.6	78.6
Kilmer, Bill, Wash.	346	178	51.4	2440	7.05	23	6.6	96t	16	4.6	77.1
Harris, James, L.A.	285	157	55.1	2148	7.54	14	4.9	54t	15	5.3	73.7

1975 PASSING - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Att	Comp	Pct Comp	Gross Yards	Tkd	Yards Lost	Net Yards	TDs	Pct TDs	Long	Had Int	Pct Int	Avg Yards Comp	Avg Pass Play	Pts
Baltimore	354	211	59.6	2,606	38	325	2,281	19	5.4	90t	8	2.3	12.35	5.82	90.8
Cincinnati	433	255	58.9	3,497	34	256	3,241	23	5.3	55	14	3.2	13.71	6.94	89.2
Pittsburgh	337	191	56.7	2,544	31	290	2,254	21	6.2	59	12	3.6	13.32	6.13	86.5
Miami	279	170	60.9	2,196	23	187	2,009	19	6.8	79t	17	6.1	12.92	6.65	82.9
Buffalo	354	182	51.4	2,661	22	168	2,493	28	7.9	77t	19	5.4	14.62	6.63	80.1
Kansas City	395	217	54.9	2,785	53	425	2,360	15	3.8	69t	16	4.1	12.83	5.27	72.8
Oakland	350	196	56.0	2,625	26	234	2,391	19	5.4	53	28	8.0	13.39	6.36	64.7
Houston	347	165	47.6	2,099	27	230	1,869	14	4.0	77t	17	4.9	12.72	5.00	59.9
New England	401	193	48.1	2,768	39	330	2,438	16	4.0	76	28	7.0	14.34	5.54	55.1
San Diego	337	165	49.0	1,998	50	388	1,610	7	2.1	57	17	5.0	12.11	4.16	53.8
Denver	427	210	49.2	2,900	47	359	2,541	15	3.5	90t	34	8.0	13.81	5.36	49.7
Cleveland	437	220	50.3	2,297	38	340	1,957	7	1.6	48	23	5.3	10.44	4.12	49.2
New York Jets	384	174	45.3	2,468	34	317	2,151	16	4.2	91	33	8.6	14.18	5.15	44.8
Conference Total	4,835	2,549	---	33,444	462	3,849	29,595	219	---	91	266	---	---	---	---
Conference Average	371.9	196.1	52.7	2,572.6	35.5	296.1	2,276.5	16.8	4.5	--	20.5	5.5	13.12	5.59	66.9

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Att	Comp	Pct Comp	Gross Yards	Tkd	Yards Lost	Net Yards	TDs	Pct TDs	Long	Had Int	Pct Int	Avg Yards Comp	Avg Pass Play	Pts
Minnesota	446	281	63.0	3,121	29	260	2,861	27	6.1	46	14	3.1	11.11	6.02	91.2
Dallas	376	207	55.1	2,835	39	242	2,593	19	5.1	62	17	4.5	13.70	6.25	77.7
St. Louis	355	187	52.7	2,619	8	66	2,553	20	5.6	80t	20	5.6	14.01	7.03	72.1
Los Angeles	334	181	54.2	2,450	30	255	2,195	14	4.2	54t	17	5.1	13.54	6.03	70.6
Detroit	362	183	50.6	2,240	41	323	1,917	15	4.1	65t	12	3.3	12.24	4.76	70.0
Washington	448	229	51.1	3,092	27	175	2,917	28	6.3	96t	29	6.5	13.50	6.14	67.3
San Francisco	450	234	52.0	2,806	33	246	2,560	15	3.3	68t	19	4.2	11.99	5.30	64.9
Philadelphia	458	238	52.0	2,640	30	200	2,440	19	4.1	62t	23	5.0	11.09	5.00	62.3
New York Giants	379	193	50.9	2,457	49	355	2,102	11	2.9	56	18	4.7	12.73	4.91	61.6
Green Bay	394	212	53.8	2,400	42	328	2,072	11	2.8	56	22	5.6	11.32	4.75	58.3
Chicago	356	191	53.7	2,169	32	330	1,839	9	2.5	57	23	6.5	11.36	4.74	53.5
Atlanta	388	165	42.5	2,361	32	294	2,067	18	4.6	68	29	7.5	14.31	4.92	47.0
New Orleans	392	181	46.2	1,961	53	416	1,545	8	2.0	71t	24	6.1	10.83	3.47	42.7
Conference Total	5,138	2,682	---	33,151	445	3,490	29,661	214	---	96t	267	---	---	---	---
Conference Average	395.2	206.3	52.2	2,550.1	34.2	268.5	2,281.6	16.5	4.2	--	20.5	5.2	12.36	5.31	64.8
League Total	9,973	5,231	---	66,595	907	7,339	59,256	433	---	96t	533	---	---	---	---
League Average	383.6	201.2	52.5	2,561.3	34.9	282.3	2,279.1	16.7	4.3	--	20.5	5.3	12.73	5.45	65.9

PASS RECEIVING

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Rucker, Reggie, Clev.	60	770	12.8	40t	3
Mitchell, Lydell, Balt.	60	544	9.1	35t	4
Chandler, Bob, Buff.	55	746	13.6	35	6
Burrough, Ken, Hou.	53	1063	20.1	77t	8
Branch, Cliff, Oak.	51	893	17.5	53	9
Swann, Lynn, Pitt.	49	781	15.9	43t	11
Caster, Richard, N.Y.J.	47	820	17.4	91	4
Vataha, Randy, N.E.	46	720	15.7	47	6
Curran, Pat, S.D.	45	619	13.8	39	0
Curtis, Isaac, Cin.	44	934	21.2	55	7
Pruitt, Greg, Clev.	44	299	6.8	48	1
Biletnikoff, Fred, Oak.	43	587	13.7	26	2
Clark, Boobie, Cin.	42	334	8.0	27	0
Keyworth, Jon, Den.	42	314	7.5	19t	1

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Foreman, Chuck, Minn.	73	691	9.5	33	9
Payne, Ken, G.B.	58	766	13.2	54	0
Marinero, Ed, Minn.	54	462	8.6	25	3
Taylor, Charley, Wash.	53	744	14.0	64	6
Gilliam, John, Minn.	50	777	15.5	46	7
Young, Charlie, Phil.	49	659	13.4	47	3
Carmichael, Harold, Phil.	49	639	13.0	62t	7
Gray, Mel, St.L.	48	926	19.3	74t	11
Pearson, Drew, Dall.	46	822	17.9	46t	8
Washington, Gene, S.F.	44	735	16.7	68t	9
Jackson, Harold, L.A.	43	786	18.3	54t	7
Gillette, Walker, N.Y.G.	43	600	14.0	50	2
Metcalfe, Terry, St.L.	43	378	8.8	30t	2
Grant, Frank, Wash.	41	776	18.9	96t	8

SCORING

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	Tds	TDR	XPM	XPA	FGM	FGA	PTS
Simpson, O.J., Buff.	23	16	0	0	0	0	138
Banaszak, Pete, Oak.	16	16	0	0	0	0	96
Stenerud, Jan, K.C.	0	0	30	31	22	32	96
Gerela, Roy, Pitt.	0	0	44	46	17	21	95

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	Tds	TDR	XPM	XPA	FGM	FGA	PTS
Foreman, Chuck, Minn.	22	13	0	0	0	0	132
Fritsch, Toni, Dall.	0	0	38	40	22	35	104
Bakken, Jim, St.L.	0	0	40	41	19	24	97
Dempsey, Tom, L.A.	0	0	31	36	21	26	94

1975 SCORING - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Tds	TDR	TDP	TDM	XPM	XPA	FGM	FGA	SAF	POINTS
Buffalo	57	26	28	3	51	57	9	16	0	420
Baltimore	52	28	19	5	51	52	10	18	1	395
Oakland	48	28	19	1	44	48	13	21	2	375
Pittsburgh	46	22	21	3	44	46	17	21	1	373
Miami	46	26	19	1	40	46	13	16	1	357
Cincinnati	45	20	23	2	40	45	10	21	0	340
Houston	34	14	14	6	31	34	18	30	2	293
Kansas City	31	14	15	2	30	31	22	32	0	282
New England	33	14	16	3	33	33	9	17	0	258
New York Jets	32	15	16	1	27	31	13	21	0	258
Denver	28	9	15	4	23	28	21	28	0	254
Cleveland	24	14	7	3	21	24	17	23	1	218
San Diego	22	14	7	1	21	22	12	24	0	189
Conference Total	498	244	219	35	456	497	184	288	8	4,012
Conference Average	38.3	18.8	16.8	2.7	35.1	38.2	14.2	22.2	0.6	308.6

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	Tds	TDR	TDP	TDM	XPM	XPA	FGM	FGA	SAF	POINTS
Minnesota	48	18	27	3	46	48	13	17	2	377
St. Louis	43	19	20	4	41	43	19	24	0	356
Dallas	41	17	19	5	38	40	22	35	0	350
Washington	40	9	28	3	37	39	16	25	0	325
Los Angeles	36	18	14	4	31	36	21	26	1	312
San Francisco	31	12	15	4	27	31	14	28	0	255
Detroit	29	10	15	4	25	29	14	21	2	245
Atlanta	33	12	18	3	30	33	4	10	0	240
Green Bay	27	14	11	2	22	27	12	17	3	226
Philadelphia	24	3	19	2	21	24	20	29	0	225
New York Giants	29	17	11	1	24	29	6	11	0	216
Chicago	22	11	9	2	18	22	13	23	1	191
New Orleans	19	9	8	2	18	19	11	21	0	165
Conference Total	422	169	214	39	378	420	185	287	9	3,483
Conference Average	32.5	13.0	16.5	3.0	29.1	32.3	14.2	22.1	0.7	267.9
League Total	920	413	433	74	834	917	369	575	17	7,495
League Average	35.4	15.9	16.7	2.8	32.1	35.3	14.2	22.1	0.7	288.3

PUNT RETURNS

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	FC	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Johnson, Billy, Hou.	40	1	612	15.3	83t	3
Colzie, Neal, Oak.	48	3	655	13.6	64	0
Solomon, Fred, Mia.	26	4	320	12.3	50t	1

t = Touchdown

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	FC	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Metcalf, Terry, St.L.	23	3	285	12.4	69t	1
Chapman, Gil, N.O.	17	3	207	12.2	42	0
Livers, Virgil, Chi.	42	0	456	10.9	39	0
Taylor, Bruce, S.F.	16	1	166	10.4	66	0

1975 PUNT RETURNS - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	FC	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Houston	43	2	620	14.4	83t	3
Oakland	58	4	688	11.9	64	0
Miami	43	10	509	11.8	50t	1
San Diego	38	0	442	11.6	52	1
Denver	41	5	470	11.5	51	0
Baltimore	42	15	439	10.5	53	0
Pittsburgh	54	13	548	10.1	48	0
Buffalo	33	14	278	8.4	30	0
Kansas City	37	6	303	8.2	34	0
New England	33	8	262	7.9	29	0
Cleveland	40	3	294	7.4	30	0
Cincinnati	48	6	267	5.6	34	0
New York Jets	22	7	116	5.3	34	0
Conference Total	532	93	5,236	---	83t	5
Conference Average	40.9	7.2	402.8	9.8	--	0.4

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	FC	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
St. Louis	40	6	410	10.3	69t	1
Chicago	52	3	512	9.8	39	0
Dallas	32	15	313	9.8	43t	1
San Francisco	63	1	616	9.8	66	0
Los Angeles	55	2	517	9.4	40	0
Detroit	36	12	328	9.1	43	0
New Orleans	41	5	370	9.0	42	0
Philadelphia	35	5	299	8.5	39	0
Washington	61	9	464	7.6	52t	1
New York Giants	49	9	350	7.1	65t	1
Atlanta	35	5	248	7.1	24	0
Green Bay	30	7	190	6.3	27	0
Minnesota	36	20	168	4.7	22	0
Conference Total	565	99	4,785	---	69t	4
Conference Average	43.5	7.6	368.1	8.5	--	0.3
League Total	1,097	192	10,021	---	83t	9
League Average	42.2	7.4	385.4	9.1	--	0.3

PUNTING

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	CC
Guy, Ray, Oak.	68	2979	43.8	64	6
Bateman, Marv, Buff.	61	2536	41.6	74	4
Wilson, Jerrel, K.C.	54	2233	41.4	64	5
Cockroft, Don, Clev.	82	3317	40.5	67	7
Van Heusen, Bill, Den. ...	63	2515	39.9	64	2
Lee, David, Balt.	86	3402	39.6	62	5
Pastorini, Dan, Hou.	62	2447	39.5	68	4
Walden, Bobby, Pitt.	69	2717	39.4	67	9
Green, Dave, Cin.	68	2655	39.0	57	4
Patrick, Mike, N.E.	83	3223	38.8	62	8

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	CC
Weaver, Herman, Det.	80	3361	42.0	61	5
Wittum, Tom, S.F.	67	2804	41.9	64	4
James, John, Atl.	89	3696	41.5	75	6
Clabo, Neil, Minn.	73	2997	41.1	62	9
Blanchard, Tom, N.O.	92	3776	41.0	61	5
Jennings, Dave, N.Y.G. ...	76	3107	40.9	64	6
Bragg, Mike, Wash.	72	2924	40.6	63	9
Jones, Spike, Phil.	68	2742	40.3	64	4
Carrell, Duane, L.A.	73	2874	39.4	57	1
Hoopas, Mitch, Dall.	68	2676	39.4	55	4

CC = Coffin corner punts that go out of bounds, downed, fair-caught, between opponents' goal and 10-yard line, or are not returned past the 10-yard line

1975 PUNTING - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	Blk
Oakland	68	2,979	43.8	64	0
Buffalo	61	2,536	41.6	74	2
Cleveland	82	3,317	40.5	67	1
Denver	63	2,515	39.9	64	0
Baltimore	86	3,402	39.6	62	1
Pittsburgh	69	2,717	39.4	67	1
Houston	74	2,906	39.3	68	0
Kansas City	72	2,826	39.3	64	2
Cincinnati	68	2,655	39.0	57	1
New England	83	3,223	38.8	62	0
Miami	65	2,506	38.6	61	0
San Diego	79	2,910	36.8	56	1
New York Jets	59	2,156	36.5	71	3
Conference Total	929	36,648	----	74	12
Conference Average	71.5	2,819.1	39.4	--	0.9

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	Blk
Detroit	81	3,395	41.91	61	1
San Francisco	67	2,804	41.85	64	3
Atlanta	89	3,696	41.5	75	1
Minnesota	73	2,997	41.1	62	2
New Orleans	92	3,776	41.0	61	3
Washington	72	2,924	40.6	63	0
Los Angeles	73	2,874	39.4	57	0
Dallas	68	2,676	39.4	55	1
New York Giants	86	3,353	39.0	64	0
Chicago	94	3,664	39.0	60	0
Philadelphia	83	3,231	38.9	64	0
St. Louis	64	2,412	37.7	58	1
Green Bay	95	3,404	35.8	55	3
Conference Total	1,037	41,206	----	75	15
Conference Average	79.8	3,169.7	39.7	--	1.2
League Total	1,966	77,854	----	75	27
League Average	75.6	2,994.4	39.6	--	1.0

KICKOFF RETURNS

AFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Hart, Harold, Oak.	17	518	30.5	102t	1
Carter, Allen, N.E.	32	879	27.5	99t	1
Upchurch, Rich, Den.	40	1084	27.1	58	0
Washington, Vic, Buff.	35	923	26.4	59	0
Laird, Bruce, Balt.	31	799	25.8	65	0
Piccone, Lou, N.Y.J.	26	637	24.5	53	0
Johnson, Billy, Hou.	33	798	24.2	81t	1
Davis, Steve, N.Y.J.	20	483	24.2	46	0
Collier, Mike, Pitt.	22	523	23.8	94t	1
Jackson, Bernard, Cin.	25	587	23.5	39	0
Thomas, Charles, K.C.	22	516	23.5	43	0

t = Touchdown

NFC - INDIVIDUAL

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Payton, Walter, Chi.	14	444	31.7	70	0
Metcalfe, Terry, St.L.	35	960	27.4	93t	1
Thompson, Bobby, Det.	22	565	25.7	42	0
Marshall, Larry, Phil.	22	557	25.3	33	0
Moore, Manfred, S.F.	26	650	25.0	52	0
Odom, Steve, G.B.	42	1034	24.6	93t	1
Pearson, Preston, Dall.	16	391	24.4	42	0
Colbert, Rony, N.Y.G.	17	408	24.0	30	0
Kotar, Doug, N.Y.G.	17	405	23.8	64	0
McGee, Willie, L.A.	17	404	23.8	46	0
Johnson, Sammy, S.F.	17	400	23.5	41	0
Jones, Larry, Wash.	47	1086	23.1	44	0

1975 KICKOFF RETURNS - TEAM

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
Oakland	51	1,324	26.0	102t	1
Denver	59	1,446	24.5	58	0
Miami	40	949	23.7	42	0
Buffalo	62	1,457	23.5	59	0
New England	66	1,520	23.0	99t	1
New York Jets	74	1,704	23.0	53	0
Baltimore	52	1,190	22.9	65	0
Cleveland	67	1,526	22.8	92	0
Cincinnati	46	1,042	22.7	64	0
Kansas City	62	1,350	21.8	53	0
San Diego	69	1,482	21.5	41	0
Pittsburgh	38	815	21.4	94t	1
Houston	54	1,144	21.2	81t	1
Conference Total	740	16,949	----	102t	4
Conference Average	56.9	1,303.8	22.9	---	0.3

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

	No	Yards	Avg	Long	TDs
St. Louis	55	1,337	24.3	93t	1
Philadelphia	59	1,388	23.5	42	0
San Francisco	60	1,372	22.9	52	0
New York Giants	55	1,250	22.7	64	0
Los Angeles	34	764	22.5	46	0
Washington	58	1,296	22.3	50	0
Chicago	74	1,644	22.2	70	0
Green Bay	63	1,398	22.2	93t	1
Dallas	54	1,158	21.4	97t	1
Detroit	52	1,114	21.4	42	0
New Orleans	63	1,319	20.9	88	0
Minnesota	38	787	20.7	63	0
Atlanta	66	1,217	18.4	33	0
Conference Total	731	16,044	----	97t	3
Conference Average	56.2	1,234.2	21.9	--	0.2
League Total	1,471	32,993	----	102t	7
League Average	56.6	1,269.0	22.4	---	0.3

"Johnny Unitas was unique"

The 1975 stats, as usual, show the real dominance of the running game in the NFL. True it is that in pro ball the yearly total of yards gained on passes always exceeds that gained by rushing. But going back as far as 1933, when the first realistic statistics were kept, only one team has won the league title after having spent the season passing more often than running. (That was the Johnny Unitas-led Baltimore Colts of 1970. Unitas used short passes to Raymond Berry and his backs like running plays, and despite his choice of passing more than running, he provided the Colts with the type of ball control usually attributed to teams which run the ball a much higher percentage of the time. But Unitas was unique.)

In 1975, only two teams, Washington and San Francisco, passed more often than they ran. In a sense, both were surprises. George Allen, at Washington, traditionally has been a strong defensive-emphasis coach, and with a strong defensive effort the matching offense almost invariably is one of ball control with the accent on running. But Allen always has preferred to use veterans, and when only one mature front-line running back (the sometimes-healthy Larry Brown) was available, George obviously turned more often to veteran passing game artists Bill Kilmer, Randy Johnson, Charley Taylor and Frank Grant.

San Francisco also ran into a very short supply of healthy, veteran running backs and obviously turned more to Steve Spurrier and Norm Snead, and their aeriels to veteran wide receiver Gene Washington and the offensive backs.

A glance at the chart shows a basic relationship between an offense which emphasizes running and teams which made the playoffs. Only Cincinnati, of the eight playoff teams, appears out of context on the chart.

The choice between running and passing on first-and-ten is a pet subject

with grandstand quarterbacks. "Why not throw on first down?," they often say. "When you run on first down, everybody in the stadium knows it's coming."

The more astute fan knows better than that. There are running plays and there are running plays. Disguising them in formations and selecting the point of attack are only two of the many ways the offense sets the challenge.

Generally, a good ball control team takes what the defense gives it. And more often on first-and-ten, modern zone defenses give you a better shot at five yards through the line than any appreciable distance through the air. There's nothing which pleases a defensive signal caller more than second-and-ten. And with sacks taken into consideration, modern NFL teams complete less than 50% of their passes. That means that when a team passes on first down, more than half of the time it results in "second-and-ten."

Take Super Bowl X (p. 90). In that game, it was "second-and-ten (or longer)" on 14 occasions. Only twice out of those 14 chances did the offense get

a first down, a percentage of 14.3. In the same game, it was "second-and-nine (or shorter)" 28 times. On 19 occasions out of the 28, the offense went on to a first down or TD. (Field goals counted as failures in this reckoning.) That's a percentage of 67.9.

If you're a defensive signal caller, the stats show that you should delight to see the opposition throw on first down. Fifty percent of the time it portends defensive success. If a team begins with a run on first-and-ten, and gains a yard or more, the average percentage is 67.9 against your holding the offense short of a first down.

This is a contention we have made before in the seven years of this annual. We invite you to select random games with which to challenge us. Meanwhile, Chuck Noll and the Pittsburgh Steelers have tied the existing marks for Super Bowl wins by a coach and a team. They have a chance to be the first to win three in a row, but they'll never be in more danger than they were throughout Super Bowl X's bear-down, late-game win over Dallas.

**RUSH/PASS RATIO
1975 NFL SEASON**

AFC	Pct. Rush	Pct. Pass	NFC	Pct. Rush	Pct. Pass
1) Miami	68.0	32.0	1) **Los Angeles	63.7	36.3
2) **Oakland	64.8	35.2	2) *St. Louis	61.0	39.0
3) ***Pittsburgh	63.3	36.7	3) ***Dallas	60.3	39.7
4) Buffalo	62.4	37.6	4) Detroit	59.5	40.5
5) Houston	60.3	39.7	5) New York Giants	56.0	44.0
6) *Baltimore	60.2	39.8	6) *Minnesota	55.5	44.5
7) New York Jets	56.6	43.4	7) Chicago	55.3	44.7
8) San Diego	56.3	43.7	8) Atlanta	54.5	45.5
9) Kansas City	55.2	44.8	9) New Orleans	54.2	45.8
10) New England	54.1	45.9	10) Green Bay	52.2	47.8
11) *Cincinnati	53.5	46.5	11) Philadelphia	50.2	49.8
12) Denver	53.4	46.6	12) Washington	49.8	50.2
13) Cleveland	50.2	49.8	13) San Francisco	48.4	51.6

*Playoff participant **First-round winner ***Conference champion



PHOTO BY MALCOLM EMMONS

SUPER BOWL WINNERS

SB	Date	Place	Winner	Loser
I	Jan. 15, 1967	Los Angeles	Green Bay (Lombardi) (NFL) 35	Kansas City (Stram) (AFL) 10
II	Jan. 14, 1968	Miami	Green Bay (Lombardi) (NFL) 33	Oakland (Rauch) (AFL) 14
III	Jan. 12, 1969	Miami	N.Y. Jets (Ewbank) (AFL) 16	Baltimore (Shula) (NFL) 7
IV	Jan. 11, 1970	New Orleans	Kansas City (Stram) (AFL) 23	Minnesota (Grant) (NFL) 7
V	Jan. 17, 1971	Miami	Baltimore (McCafferty) (AFC) 16	Dallas (Landry) (NFC) 13
VI	Jan. 16, 1972	New Orleans	Dallas (Landry) (NFC) 24	Miami (Shula) (AFC) 3
VII	Jan. 14, 1973	Los Angeles	Miami (Shula) (AFC) 14	Washington (Allen) (NFC) 7
VIII	Jan. 13, 1974	Houston	Miami (Shula) (AFC) 24	Minnesota (Grant) (NFC) 7
IX	Jan. 12, 1975	New Orleans	Pittsburgh (Noll) (AFC) 16	Minnesota (Grant) (NFC) 6
X	Jan. 18, 1976	Miami	Pittsburgh (Noll) (AFC) 21	Dallas (Landry) (NFC) 17

Accumulative:

AFL-AFC	7-3	Lombardi	2-0
NFL-NFC	3-7	Noll	2-0
G. Bay	2-0	Ewbank	1-0
Pitts	2-0	McCafferty	1-0
N.Y. Jets	1-0	Shula	2-2
Miami	2-1	Stram	1-1
K.C.	1-1	Landry	1-2
Balt	1-1	Rauch	0-1
Dallas	1-2	Allen	0-1
Oakland	0-1	Grant	0-3
Wash	0-1		
Minn	0-3		

"Can the Steelers win again?"

SUPER BOWL X— A LAMBERT TROPHY



BY DAVE FINK

On draft day in 1974, the Steelers went into the final minute of their allotted 15 without having reached a decision on whom to draft in the second round. With the clock ticking inexorably toward the deadline, two names were still on their list. One was an outside linebacker from Kent State named Jack Lambert; the other has never been identified.

Barely five seconds remained when Pittsburgh finally informed NFL draft headquarters in New York City that Lambert had been chosen. Unbeknownst to them, they had just assured themselves of winning Super Bowl X. Sure, Lynn Swann, their No. 1 pick in that same draft, was named the Most Valuable Player in the Steelers' 21-17 victory over the Dallas Cowboys, but, with no rap against Swann intended, his performance was infinitely easier to measure. In fact, it could be measured by a line on the stat sheet that read: four catches, 161 yards, one touchdown. Lambert's performance had to be measured in blood and bruises.

For most of the first half, the 6-4½, 215-pounder was as much of a non-factor as the middle linebacker in pro football's finest, not to mention meanest, defense can be. Shortly before the half ended, however, Lambert took command. What triggered it was an epidemic of over-exuberance on the part of the Cowboys, particularly safety Cliff Harris.

With 26 seconds left in the second quarter, Steeler placekicker Roy Gerela missed a 36-yard field-goal attempt, leaving the Cowboys with a 10-7 halftime

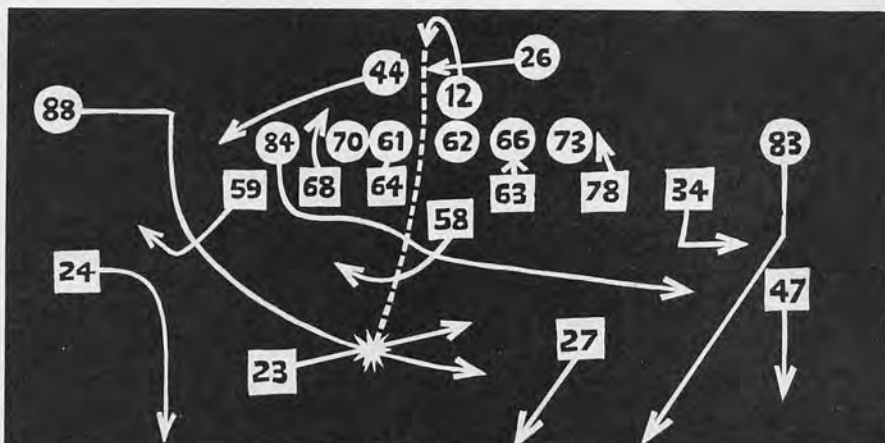


FIG. 1—WAGNER'S INTERCEPTION *Point of Interception

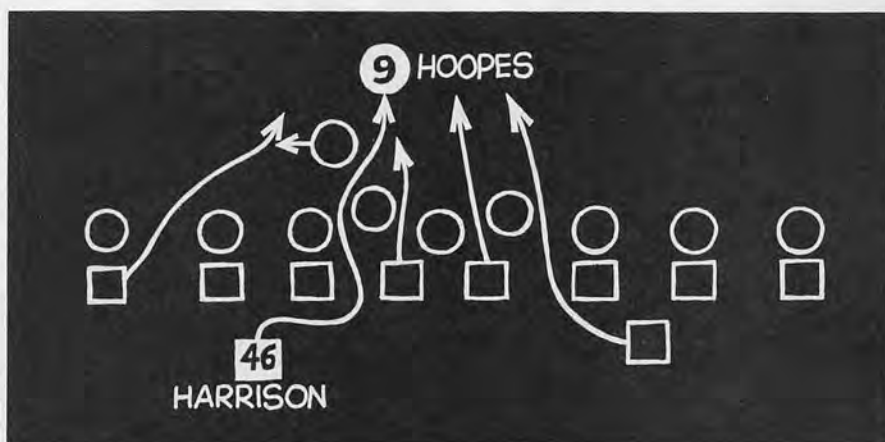


FIG. 2—THE BLOCKED PUNT

STEELERS

OFFENSE

WR 82 Stallworth
LT 55 Kolb
LG 50 Clack and
57 S. Davis
C 56 Mansfield and
52 Webster
RG 72 Mullins and
50 Clack
RT 71 Gravelle
TE 87 L. Brown
QB 12 Bradshaw
RB 20 Bleier
RB 32 Harris
WR 88 Swann

DEFENSE

LE 68 Greenwood
LT 75 Green and
64 Furness
RT 63 Holmes
RE 78 D. White
LLB 59 Ham
MLB 58 Lambert
RLB 34 Russell
LCB 24 Thomas
RCB 47 Blount
SS 23 Wagner
FS 27 G. Edwards

COWBOYS

OFFENSE

WR 83 Richards
LT 73 Neely
LG 66 Lawless
C 62 Fitzgerald
RG 61 Nye
RT 70 Wright
TE 84 Fugett
QB 12 Staubach
RB 26 P. Pearson and
21 Dennison
RB 44 Newhouse
Flk 88 D. Pearson

DEFENSE

LE 72 Jones
LT 63 Cole and
77 Gregory
RT 75 Pugh
RE 79 Martin
SLB 52 D. Edwards
MLB 55 Jordan
WLB 50 D.D. Lewis
LCB 46 Washington
RCB 20 Renfro
LS 41 Waters
RS 43 C. Harris

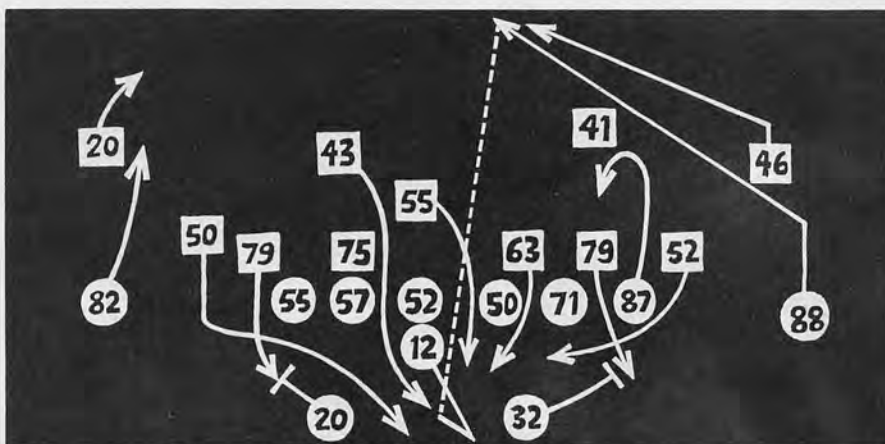


FIG. 3—THE BOMB TO SWANN

edge. While Gerela cursed his fate, Harris rushed up, stuck a finger in front of his face, shouted something to the effect of "way to go Roy. Thanks."

Then, he compounded his error by playfully slapping Gerela on the side of his helmet. Gerela opted for silence; Lambert opted for instant retaliation, flinging Harris aside as he were nothing more than confetti. Lambert's outrage surfaced again in the Steelers' normally quiet dressing room at halftime and then again during numerous defensive huddles in the last half.

"Normally, I don't say much on the field," explains Lambert. "I prefer to show my emotions physically instead of verbally. I believe in playing football as hard as I can on every play. Yes, I'm very aggressive and very physical. On the field, I guess I'm just plain mean. I love contact. I believe the game is designed to reward the ones who hit hardest. If you can't take it, you shouldn't play. I don't believe in cheapshots or arrogant gestures and I'm definitely opposed to much talking on the field, especially if it's the kind where you're just gloating or poking fun at the other guy. There's no place for that in football."

"So, when Harris did what he did to Gerela, I responded the only way I know how. There was nothing uncontrolled about it. I'm always under control on the field, but I play hard and hit hard. What the Steelers are all about to me is hard hitting and intimidation, physical intimidation gained only by out-hitting the next guy on every play. I never want to see us intimidated. NEVER. And, until Harris over-reacted, that's exactly what Dallas was doing—intimidating us. It's never happened before since I've been with the club and I never want it to happen again. After the Harris incident, we went back to being the Steelers I love and respect. Once we took physical command, I knew we'd win."

Officially, Lambert the Intimidator was

credited with seven tackles, seven assists, not including his encounter with Harris.

But to gain a clearer insight and a greater perspective on Lambert's performance, listen to teammates Dwight White and Joe Greene:

"He got us goin'. He got a-hollerin' at everybody and we just got caught up in it. His spirit was contagious." Explains White, the emotional defensive right end: "We weren't the same team in the second half. He was the catalyst we needed to get us back to playin' like the Steelers are supposed to play. Once he got shook up, we all got shook up and if I were on the other side I wouldn't want to see that happen."

"The first day I knew Lambert," Greene recalls, "I realized he was the kind of man I wanted behind me if I ever had to go into the streets to fight. The dude is mean, real mean. You don't mess around with my man Lambert."

So, with team leader Greene sidelined because of neck and shoulder injuries in the second half, Lambert's leadership qualities—always apparent but previously not needed—surfaced as if by heavenly cue. Somewhere out there, Cliff Harris should kick himself. Hard.

Lambert, however, didn't win the Super Bowl by himself. Not by a long shot. It took victories in the game's most critical matchups to beat the Cowboys, and White, Swann and Ernie Holmes provided them. White's target was Ralph Neely, Dallas' cagey veteran of left tackle. Swann's victim was Mark Washington, the first-year starter at left cornerback. Holmes' prize was a gifted rookie offensive guard named Burton Lawless.

Holmes' encounters with Lawless were perhaps the game's most lopsided and most unappreciated. To beat the Steelers, an effective inside running game is a must. To establish it, Holmes must be moved.

Few people, however, can consistently

do it and Lawless did not fall into that category. At 6-4, 265, Holmes is an impressive sight even at rest. When he begins to move with the grace and speed most wide receivers dream of, he becomes more imposing. When he unleashes the NFL's most demoralizing head-slap off his surprisingly quick initial charge, he becomes intimidating.

As a measure of the Cowboys' skill and persistence, it must be mentioned that they gained 108 yards rushing. Little of it was gained by running at Holmes; in fact, most of it was gained on delays and draws that took advantage of Holmes' rapid charge. Such strategy will occasionally account for decent yardage, but it won't beat the Steelers because the success ratio isn't high enough.

Prior to the game, White took a few verbal shots at Neely, one of the NFL's more famous holding specialists.

"He really hasn't had a good year but we've had a few good battles in the past," said White at one particular pre-game press conference in Miami. "He holds a lot, too, and I won't stand for much of that."

White's demolition job on Neely paid off in a consistently effective weak side pass rush. Because of the speed possessed by White and, more particularly, his fellow end, L.C. Greenwood, the Steelers frequently used their tackles as contain men on the outside pass rush and looped the speedy ends to the inside so they could get quicker and more frequent shots at Dallas' scrambling quarterback Roger Staubach. The tactic paid off in seven sacks, most of which came after Greene gave way to Steve Furness and when the Cowboys were in their beloved Shotgun formation.

"Dwight lived in their backfield," reminds Steeler defensive line coach George Perles in case anybody has forgotten.

With White chasing Staubach out of the pocket or into Greenwood's arms, the Cowboy passing attack sputtered.

"We pretty well knew how to stop their passing attack," says Steeler defensive coordinator Bud Carson. "In Dallas' case, it's not the plays or the people, except for Staubach, that give you the most trouble. It's the formations and the shifts. The Cowboys use a lot of trick plays and a lot of formations. They disguise a few plays in an awful lot of ways. When we said that it takes two full weeks to prepare for the Cowboys' offense, we weren't kidding."

"As an example of what they do," he continues, "consider their first touchdown. The play they used fit their tendencies. We had seen the play a lot before but we still missed it. Here's how. They lined up in a double wing, then shifted once. Mike Wagner, who calls our coverages in the secondary, saw the first shift and made the proper call. Only, while he turned his head to make the



Jack Lambert (58), seen here stopping Cowboy Preston Pearson (26) in SB X, is credited with inspiring his Steeler teammates to victory.

PHOTOS THANKS TO HARRY HOMA

calls, the Cowboys shifted a second time.

"Now they came out with a play-action scheme. It's a fake sweep with the idea being to get the defense to over-commit to the run. They use the flanker on the right side (Drew Pearson) as one of the lead blockers, or rather that's what it looks like. But instead of him cracking back on the outside linebacker (one of Dallas Coach Tom Landry's favorite plays), he drifts across the middle into the 15-20 yard range as the prime receiver. Catching us in the wrong coverage, he was wide open.

"When they ran it later in the game, Wagner caught the second shift, called the proper coverage (Fig. 1) and made a critical interception. That was, incidentally, the only wrong read we made all day, which is a credit to our players.

"It's a funny thing, but I can remember diagramming that very play for our guys before we even went to Miami. It's still on the board in our meeting room. It was one of Dallas' favorite plays. Really, it's not tricky by itself, but, with the shifts, they can disguise it well and beat you with it."

Wagner's interception was one of three by the Steeler secondary in the final half.

"Strangely enough," said Carson, "that play wasn't even a Shotgun play. We might've had a fourth interception, too, but Mel Blount (the All-Pro right cornerback and NFL Defensive Player of the Year) fell down. When he slipped, that (Percy) Howard kid had an easy touchdown. Mel had him perfectly covered until he fell down."

Blount remembers his encounter with fate vividly.

"That would've made the whole season meaningless," said the man they call Supe (for super, what else?). "It was a helpless feeling. All that work going down the drain with me lying there on the ground because I slipped. That could've been a real nightmare for me if we hadn't won the game."

If reserve fullback Reggie Harrison hadn't blocked a Mitch Hoopes punt (Fig. 2) early in the fourth quarter the Steelers might not have won.

"That was definitely the biggest play of the game. It finally got us the momentum," says Steeler Coach Chuck Noll. "We used a 10-man rush there and Reggie slipped in clean and made the block."

The Steelers hadn't used that particular rush all season and Harrison, whose mouth took the full impact of the ball, had never blocked a punt.

"I came from the inside of the rush," explains Harrison, a St. Louis castoff the Steelers picked up late in the 1974 season when injuries depleted their corps of runners. "One of our outside men drew the up-back protecting the punter to the outside, and I slipped in free."

"It all happened so fast I didn't realize it was a safety until much later."

That safety made it 10-9 and, less than three minutes later, Gerela's 36-yard field goal made it 12-10. The Steelers

never trailed thereafter despite Blount's slip and the first touchdown of the seldom-used Howard's career.

"That just proves the value of specialty teams," Noll said afterwards. "One big play like that from them can turn a game around so quickly."

And speaking of big plays, let's look at the Steeler offense:

"Our offense played pretty well," says Noll in retrospect, "but it was one of those days where we just missed on so many occasions. One play that stands out was a (fourth-and-two) pass for Franco Harris that he couldn't quite hold. If he had held it, it would've been a touchdown 'cause there was nobody near enough to catch up with him in a foot-race. That would've put us ahead, 14-10, early in the second quarter, but instead we trailed, 10-7, and started to get a little frustrated. Our defense picked us up in the fourth quarter and, when they did, the offense finally responded like it had all season."

Much of the response came from quarterback Terry Bradshaw and the aforementioned Swann. Their most memorable moment came late in the fourth quarter with the Steelers in front, 15-10.

Earlier, Bradshaw and Swann had teamed up on three completions for 97 yards. All three featured tumbling catches by the nimble Swann, whose reflexes and jumping ability are best measured by Steeler assistant coach Lionel Taylor, a record-breaking receiver in his American Football League days.

Taylor has developed a technique for checking a player's reflexes and coordination. He engages a player in conversation and, in the midst of it, drops the inner tubing from a roll of toilet paper. Few Steelers catch the tube before it hits the ground. Blount, with his enormous hands, occasionally latches onto it, but only Swann can perform the feat with any regularity.

"But the thing that separates Swann from most receivers is really the *want-to*," says Taylor. "When he goes up for a ball he *wants* to come down with it every time. You don't see very many, if any, passes knocked out of his hands. It's not that he has such big hands, either, because he doesn't. But he jumps higher than any other receiver I've seen, even though he isn't as tall (barely 5-10) as most, and his concentration and dedication to catching the ball are amazing."

"He also saves a lot of interceptions by knocking some of my uncatchable passes away," says Bradshaw. "That's one of the big reasons my interception rate is down so much."

But back to that fourth-quarter, 64-yard touchdown hookup.

First of all, you have to understand that Swann had doubts about even playing that day after incurring a severe concussion two weeks before in the Steelers' AFC title game victory over Oakland on the ice-slick artificial surface at Pittsburgh's Three Rivers Stadium.

"I hadn't felt right all week in Florida," recalls Swann, whose collegiate receiving skills went largely unappreciated out-

side of Southern California. "The day before the game, though, Franco Harris came up to me and convinced me I was all right and that the worst thing I could do was shy away from contact. I finally decided he was right. It's like riding a horse. When you fall off, you have to pick yourself right back up and try riding him again."

"In the pre-game warmups, I felt better than I had in two weeks, but not great. Early in the game, Cliff Harris tried to intimidate me just like he threatened he would in the newspapers all week. When that didn't bother me, I knew I was okay. We were pretty sure we could throw deep on them, especially if we could isolate me on Washington."

Washington's task was made more difficult by Cliff Harris' safety blitz. (Fig. 3) As it was, Harris knocked out Bradshaw, but the bomb already had been delivered. As a result, an unforgettable play developed even though Bradshaw can't remember it.

"Any blitz is a risk," says Carson, who rarely permits the Steelers to do so. "The safety blitz is the most dangerous, especially if the blitzer is picked off or even slowed down. That's what happened with Dallas on our last touchdown. They blitzed, we picked it up long enough to let Bradshaw throw the ball. That left Washington man-to-man against Swann. Washington did a great job for about 40-45 yards, too, which is all you can ever expect, maybe a lot more. Then, in the last five yards before Swann got the ball, he turned on the juice and beat Washington. That's why you need deep help from a safety. The help wasn't coming due to the blitz and we got a touchdown. Bradshaw threw a great pass, even though he didn't know it until about 15 minutes after the game."

1. Steeler HC Chuck Noll distinctly remembered diagramming Dallas's shift that led to Wagner's interception (Figure 1) on a perfect defense call.

2. When Cliff Harris safety blitzed in the 4th quarter, it left Swann (88) one-on-one with Washington (46) and Swann won (see figure 3) for TD.

3. Chuck Noll calls this the Steelers' biggest play of the game (Figure 2). Reserve fullback Reggie Harrison blocks Hoopes 4th quarter punt.

4. Steelers Steve Furness (64) and Jack Lambert (58) close the path for Cowboy Robert Newhouse (44). Steelers defense came through in final minutes.



Though the Steelers realized long before kickoff time that Swann could handle Washington one-on-one, Noll's fertile mind had developed a wrinkle that would no doubt confuse the Cowboys should it be necessary.

Frequently, Noll switches Gerry Mullins from right guard to left end in short-yardage situations. Mullins was a tight end at Southern Cal. and has caught three TD passes as a pro, so his pass-receiving ability must always be respected. Normally, though, Mullins becomes an additional blocker. In the Super Bowl, Noll took this tactic a step further.

He moved Mullins from guard to flanker, using starter Larry Brown and backup man Randy Grossman as the tight ends. With Mullins flanked barely a yard outside of Grossman on the right side, the Cowboys had to over-shift in that direction to offset the potential blocking advantage. The first time the strategy was employed, Washington closed fast and stopped Franco Harris for a two-yard loss. On the play, however, Mullins had attempted to solidify the blocking wedge as Harris swept to the outside.

That planted a seed of doubt that would haunt Cowboy defenders a few minutes later. Late in the first quarter, Mullins' decoy to the inside froze the Dallas linebackers long enough that Grossman encountered no resistance while slipping into the end zone. There, Bradshaw found him with a seven-yard touchdown pass. And by implanting the idea of run whenever Mullins

stepped inside, the Cowboys were forced to react incorrectly when Noll finally unleashed the pass.

"We had done that a lot, using a wide receiver as a crackback blocker or as a decoy," said Mullins immediately after the game. "But they had never used me quite that way. It was a solid idea and it worked well."

Ironically, Noll's brilliant strategem would've been forgotten if a last-minute play had backfired.

With Bradshaw already in the locker-room with a slight concussion, seldom-used reserve Terry Hanratty was the quarterback for the Steelers' final possession. Suddenly, they faced a fourth-and-nine call from the Cowboys' 41. Since Dallas had no timeouts remaining, Noll discarded the obvious notion to punt. He figured that if blocked—and Dallas had come close on several occasions—the Cowboys' position might well be good enough to make the absence of timeouts meaningless. In addition, there was the threat of a blocked punt turning into a Cowboy touchdown.

So, Noll gambled. He told Hanratty to call a running play. What was even more surprising was that the call went to halfback Rocky Bleier, not fullback Franco Harris. Bleier, the celebrated Vietnam war hero, struggled for only two yards at right tackle before Too Tall Jones sat on him.

The Cowboys had 1:22 to cover 61 yards.

"I have an awful lot of faith in our defense," said Noll later. "They've done the job under pressure so many times before. I felt confident they could handle the situation."

Which, of course, they did, even though it took safety Glen Edwards' interception of a deflected (by Wagner) pass for Drew Pearson on the final play of the game to uphold that judgment.

"It was the second game in a row,"

Lambert notes, "that we were on the field for the last play of the game with a victory or a defeat on the line. We haven't lost yet, have we? That's why we're champs again. You don't win the Super Bowl two years in a row without being very, very good, even when things look darkest."

"We didn't think we'd stop them, we knew we would. That's the difference between this team right now and the other good teams in the league. We've done things right so often that we believe we can do them even when no one else does. I'm sure there were a lot of people certain that Dallas was going to pull it out there at the end because of destiny or something like that."

"Dallas is a terrific team. They gave us a terrific game, even though they used a lot of cheap trick plays we don't care for too much. What we proved was that you can't beat us that way. You have to beat us at our game, which is physical, aggressive football. That's the way the game should be played and the way we play. We believe we can beat anybody right now. We have no doubts that we are fundamentally and physically better than any team around. That's why we've been champs two straight years. Next season we'll have to prove that to ourselves and everybody else all over again, but no one has ever won three straight Super Bowls, so that's the kind of challenge I think we'll thrive on."

"Pressure? What pressure. There'd be pressure if we doubted we could do it again. There'd have been pressure on the last play of the Oakland game and the Super Bowl if we had had any players doubting that we could stop them. But we didn't have any. We kept our cool, did what we were supposed to do and what we were taught to do."

So ends the football gospel according to Jack Lambert. That kind of attitude, more than anything else, perhaps, is why the Steelers won Super Bowl.



SUPER BOWL X-Play-By-Play

Miami, Jan. 18, 1976

Dallas (NFC) vs. Pittsburgh (AFC)

Dallas wins toss, receives.

Pittsburgh defends west goal.

FIRST QUARTER

Gerela kicks off to D3. P. Pearson returns 5, hands off to Henderson, who returns 48 to P44.

DALLAS (14:46)

1-10-P44 Staubach tackled (Greenwood), fumbles, recovered by Fitzgerald (-5)
2-15-P49 Newhouse at RT (2) (Holmes)
3-13-P47 Staubach overthrows P. Pearson, incomplete
4-13-P47 Hoopes punts (40) to Edwards at P7, returns (10) to P17 (Breunig)

PITTSBURGH (13:12)

1-10-P17 Harris at LE (8) (Renfro)
2-2-P25 Bleier at LG (8) (C. Harris) FD
1-10-P33 Harris at RG (5) (Martin)
2-5-P38 Harris at RT (4) (Martin)
3-1-P42 Harris at RE (-2) (Washington)
4-3-P40 Walden to punt, fumbles snap, recovers (-11) (DuPree)

DALLAS (10:32)

1-10-P29 PASS: STAUBACH TO D. PEARSON (at 15) WHO RUNS FOR TD (29)
PAT: FRITSCH (Walters holding)
SCORE: DALLAS 7, PITTSBURGH 0 (4:36)

(10:24) Fritsch kicks off to P6. Blount returns (27) to P33 (White)

PITTSBURGH (10:13)

1-10-P33 Harris at RE (7) (Gregory, Harris)
2-3-P40 Bleier at RG (2) (Martin)
3-1-P42 Harris at LG (5) (Harris) FD
1-10-P47 Bleier at LT (5) (Waters)
2-5-D48 Pass: Bradshaw-Swann, deep right sideline (32) (Harris) FD
1-10-D16 Bleier at LT (5) (Pugh)
2-5-D11 Harris at RE (4) (Jordan, Jones)
3-1-D7 PASS: BRADSHAW-GROSSMAN AT RIGHT END ZONE FOR TD (7) PAT: GERELA (Walden holding) SCORE: DALLAS 7, PITTSBURGH 7 (9:03)

DALLAS (5:46)

1-10-D35 Newhouse at LE (8) (Lambert)
2-2-D43 Dennison at RT (5) (Thomas) FD
1-10-D48 Pass: Staubach-Fugett, middle (9) (Edwards)
2-1-P43 Newhouse, middle (16) (Thomas) FD
1-10-P27 Newhouse at RG (5) (Greenwood)
2-5-P22 Dennison at LG (4) (Holmes)
3-1-P18 Newhouse at LT (0) (Holmes)
4-1-P18 Dennison at LT (3) (Lambert)
1-10-P15 P. Pearson at RG (0) (Lambert)
2-10-P15 Newhouse at RE (1) (Lambert)

END OF FIRST QUARTER
SCORE: DALLAS 7, PITTSBURGH 7

SECOND QUARTER

3-9-P14 Penalty: Dallas (illegal motion) (-5)
3-14-P19 Staubach's pass to Fugett, broken up (Edwards)
4-14-P19 FIELD GOAL: FRITSCH (Walters holding) (36) SCORE: DALLAS 10, PITTSBURGH 7 (0:15)

(14:45) Fritsch kicks off to P13. Blount returns (19) to P32 (Breunig)

KEY TO CHART

KICKOFF -//--//--//--//--//--//
PUNT oooooooooooo
FIELD GOAL -O-O-O-O-O-O-O
INTERCEPTION INTERC
RUSH RETURN _____
FUMBLE FU
RECOVERY REC.
PENALTY XXXXXXXXXX
LOOSE BALL ~~~~~
INCOMPLETE IMC
PASS - - - - -

PITTSBURGH (14:34)

1-10-P32 Bradshaw overthrows Stallworth.
2-10-P32 Bleier at RT (6) (Henderson)
3-4-P38 Bradshaw, back to pass, runs at LE (7) (Renfro) FD
1-10-P45 Harris at LT (11) (Jordan) FD
1-10-D44 Pass: Bradshaw-Stallworth (left flat) (-5) (Martin)
2-15-D49 Pass: Bradshaw-Stallworth (13) (Harris)
3-2-D36 Harris at LG (0) (Martin)
4-2-D36 Bradshaw's pass, right sideline, to F. Harris, broken up (C. Harris)

DALLAS (10:51)

1-10-D36 Newhouse at RG (3) (Furness)
2-7-D39 Pass: Staubach-Dennison (6) (Ham)
3-1-D45 Staubach overthrows Newhouse, left sideline
4-1-D45 Hoopes punts (37) to P18. D. Brown returns (5) to P23 (White)

PITTSBURGH (9:05)

1-10-P23 Bleier at RT (2) (Waters)
2-8-P25 Bradshaw's pass to Stallworth, deep left sideline, broken up (Lewis)
3-8-P25 Bradshaw sacked (-5) (White)
4-13-P20 Walden punts (32) to D48. Fair catch (Richards)

DALLAS (8:04)

1-10-D48 Pass: Staubach-P. Pearson (9) (Ham)
2-1-P43 Staubach fumbles exchange and recovers (0)
3-1-P43 Pass: Staubach-P. Pearson at left sideline (7) (Edwards) FD
1-10-P36 Newhouse at LE (2) (Wagner)

2-8-P34

Staubach overthrows P. Pearson, left flat.

3-8-P34

Pass: Staubach-Young, from shotgun, heavy pressure, right sideline (14) (Wagner) FD

1-10-P20

Newhouse at LT (-3) (Russell)

2-13-P23

Staubach sacked (-12) (Greenwood)

3-25-P35

Staubach sacked (-10) (White)

4-23-P45

Hoopes punts (39) 00B at P6

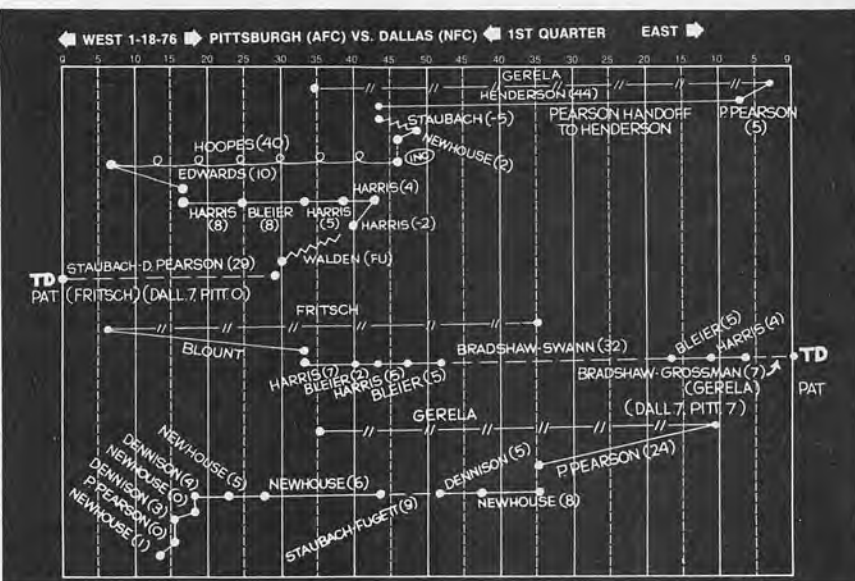
PITTSBURGH (3:47)

1-10-P6 Bleier at LE (2) (Edwards, Jordan)
2-8-P8 Harris at RE (2) (Edwards)
3-6-P10 Pass: Bradshaw-Swann, deep right (53) (Renfro) FD
1-10-D37 Bradshaw overthrows Swann, deep center
2-10-D37 (1:59) Bleier at RT (7) (Lewis)
3-3-D30 (1:40) Harris at RG (4) (Lewis, Jordan)
1-10-D26 (1:10) Pass: Bradshaw-L. Brown, out of scramble, left sideline (7) (Lewis)
2-3-D19 (0:42) Bleier at RT (0) (Martin)
3-3-D19 (0:32) Bradshaw's pass to Stallworth, left at goal line, broken up (Renfro)
4-3-D19 (0:26) Walden holds, Gerela misses 36 yard FG attempt

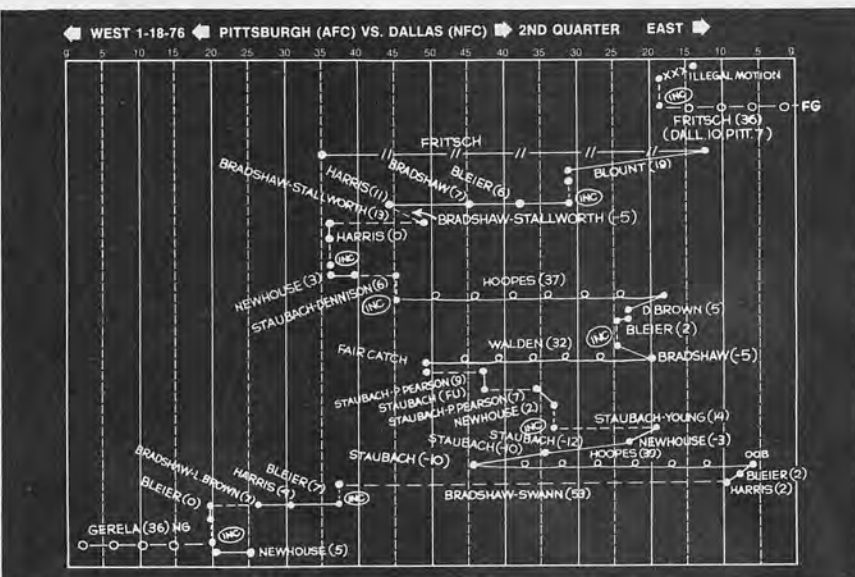
DALLAS (0:22)

1-10-D20 (0:22) Newhouse at RT (5) (Banaszak)

END OF FIRST HALF
SCORE: DALLAS 10, PITTSBURGH 7



FIRST QUARTER



SECOND QUARTER

Dallas defends west goal. Fritsch kicks off to P8.
Blount returns (18) to P26

1-10-P26 Harris at RG (3) (Jones)
2-7-P29 Harris at RE (-5) (Martin)
3-12-P24 Bradshaw's pass to L. Brown broken
up (Harris)
4-12-P24 Walden punts (34) to D42. Fair catch
(Richards)

1-10-D42 P. Pearson at LE (0) (Blount)
2-10-D42 Dennison at middle (3) (Holmes)
3-7-D45 Staubach's pass to Richards, right
sideline, intercepted at P40
(Thomas), returned (35) to D25
(DuPre)

1-10-D25	Harris at LE (3) (Jordan, Harris)
2-7-D22	Harris at RT (6) (Waters, Jordan)
3-1-D16	Harris at LE (2) (Renfro) FD
1-10-D14	Bradshaw at RE (-2) (Jones, Pugh)
2-12-D16	Bradshaw overthrows Swann in end zone.
3-12-D16	Bradshaw's pass to Swann at right side broken up (Washington)
4-12-D16	Walden holds, Gerela misses 33 yard FG attempt

1-10-D20 P. Pearson at RT (9) (Lambert)
2-1-D29 Newhouse at LT (2) (Furness) FD

1-10-D31 Newhouse at LT (0) (Greenwood)
2-10-D31 Newhouse at LT (6) (Lambert)
3-4-D37 Staubach at RE (3) (Furness)
4-1-D40 Hoopes punts (45) to P15. D. Brown
returns (9) to P24 (Breunig)

1-10-P24 Harris at RT (3) (Jordan)
2-7-P27 Pass: Bradshaw-Swann, deep right
sideline (12) (Washington) FD
1-10-P39 Bleier at RT (3) (Edwards)
2-7-P42 Harris at RG (6) (C. Harris)
3-1-P48 Bradshaw's pass to L. Brown broken
up (Waters)
4-1-P48 Walden punts (34) to D18. Fair catch
(Richards)

1-10-D18 Newhouse at RG (6) (Ham)
2-4-D24 P. Pearson at LT (3) (Greenwood)
3-1-D27 Newhouse at LT (2) (Russell) FD
1-10-D29 P. Pearson at LT (2) (White)
2-8-D31 Pass: Staubach-Newhouse, left

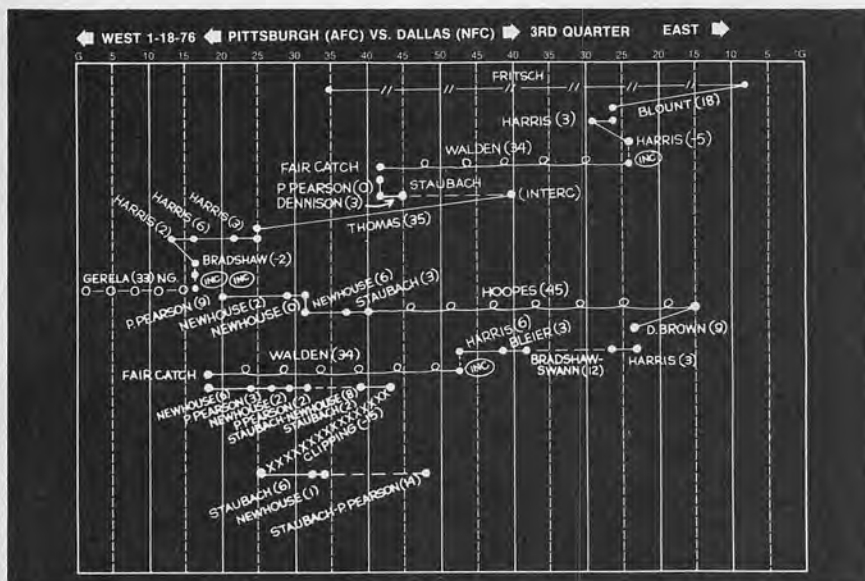
1-10-D39 Staubach scrambles, runs middle (2) (Russell). Penalty: Dallas, clipping (15) (Newhouse).

1-23-D26 Staubach scrambles, runs RE (6)
(Ham)

2-17-D32 Newhouse at LG (1) (Furness,
Lambert)

3-16-D33 Pass, Staubach-P, Pearson, left (14)
(Blount)

END OF THIRD QUARTER
SCORE: DALLAS 10, PITTSBURGH 7



FOURTH QUARTER

4-2-D47 Hoopes punts (36) to P17. D. Brown fumbles, recovered by Thomas at P17.

1-10-P17 Pass: Bradshaw-Harris, right sideline
(26) (Edwards) FD
1-10-P43 Bradshaw overthrows Stallworth
2-10-P43 Harris at RT (-2) (Pugh)
3-12-P41 Bradshaw sacked (-14) (White)
4-26-P27 Walden punts (59) to D14. Richards
returns (5) to D19 (Davis)

1-10-D19 Staubach hands off to P. Pearson, laterals to Staubach, sacked (-1) (Furness)

2-11-D18
3-10-D19
4-13-D16

(11:28) Hoopes kicks off (50) to P30. Collier returns (25) to D45. (Breunig)

1-10-D45 Harris at LE (5) (Lewis)
2-5-D40 Bleier at LT (4) (Lewis)
3-1-D36 Harris at LE (7) (C. Harris) FD
1-10-D29 Bleier at RG (1) (Jones)
2-9-D28 Bradshaw at RE (8), fumbles OOB
(Washington)
3-1-D20 Harris at RG (0) (Jordan, C. Harris)
4-1-D20 FIELD GOAL: GERELA, WALDEN
HOLDING (36) SCORE: PITTSBURGH
12, DALLAS 10 (6:30)

(8:41) Gerela kicks off (50) to D15. P. Pearson bobbles, recovers. No return.

1-10-D15 Staubach's pass to D. Pearson intercepted (Wagner) at D26, returned (19) to D7 (Neely)

1-G-D7 Bleier at RE (3) (Jones)
2-G-D4 Bradshaw, middle (3) (Jones, Harris)
3-G-D1 Harris at LG, fumbles, recovers (0)
4-G-D1 FIELD GOAL: GERELA, WALDEN
HOLDING (18) SCORE: PITTSBURGH
15, DALLAS 10 (8:23)

(6:37) Gerela kicks off to D5. P. Pearson returns (19) to D24 (Shell)

1-10-D24	Pass: Staubach-Newhouse, right flat (4) (Furness)
2-6-D28	Staubach sacked (-9) (Greenwood)
3-15-D19	Pass: Staubach-Young, left flat (10) (Greenwood)
4-5-D29	Hoopes punts (48) to P23. Edwards returns (7) to P30 (Barnes)

1-10-P30 Harris, middle (4) (Pugh)
2-6-P34 Harris at RT (2) (Jones, C. Harris)
3-4-P36 PASS: BRADSHAW DEEP RIGHT TO
SWANN AT D5, RUNS IN FOR TD
(64). (Bradshaw injured on play).
Walden holding, Gerela misses PAT
(hit left upright) SCORE:

PITTSBURGH 21, DALLAS 10 (11:58)
(3:02) Gerela kicks off into end zone. Touchback.

1-10-D20	Pass: Staubach-Young (7) (Russell)
2-3-D27	Pass: Staubach-D. Pearson, deep right sideline (30) (Thomas) FD
1-10-P43	Pass: Staubach-P. Pearson, left sideline (11) (Russell) FD
1-10-P32	Staubach sacked (-2) (White)
2-12-P34	PASS: STAUBACH-P. HOWARD, IN LEFT END ZONE (34) FOR TD, PAT. FRITSCH, WATERS HOLDING
	SCORE: PITTSBURGH 21, DALLAS 17 (13:12)

(1:48) Fritsch kicks off, onsidcs, to D42. Recovered by Mullin.

1-10-D42 Harris at LG (-2) (Waters)
2-12-D44 (1:41) Harris at RE (2) (Martin)
3-10-D42 (1:33) Bleier at LG (1) (Pugh)
4-9-D41 (1:28) Bleier at RT (2) (Jones)

1-10-D39	Staubach at LE (11) FD
1-10-50	Pass: Staubach-P. Pearson (12) (Keillum) FD
1-10-P38	Staubach recovers fumble, overthrows D. Pearson
2-10-P38	Staubach pass to P. Howard, incomplete in right end zone (Lambert)
3-10-P38	Staubach's pass to D. Pearson intercepted (Edwards) and returned (30).

END OF GAME

FINAL SCORE:
PITTSBURGH 21, DALLAS 17

"Many memorable moments"

This segment of our annual is intended as a reference section. For keepers of football memorabilia, the actual play-by-play of football's biggest annual event will become, in time, an encounter with the past. It will become a source for future games of trivia.

If you haven't played the game of sports trivia, you've missed a universally popular way of spending idle time in airliners, at the lunch counters and water coolers; and in locker rooms and frat houses.

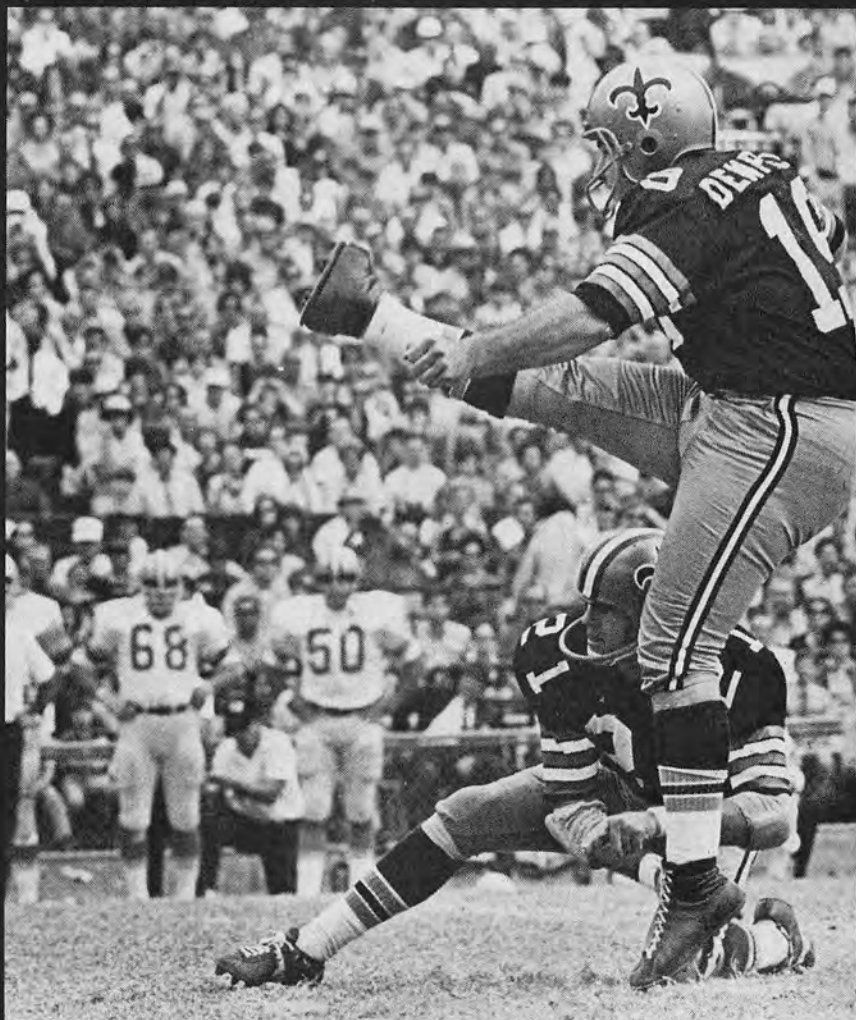
For years, the television and radio program "Sports Challenge" has parlayed old sports films and trivia into a show, not only popular with the average viewer, but even more popular with the jocks.

Some favorite trivia questions:

- (1) In 1963, the MVPs of both major baseball leagues and both pro football leagues all (four) wore the same uniform number. Who were they?
- (2) What former head basketball coach at Oregon University also was the head coach of the Rams in the NFL?
- (3) What four pass receiving ends whose last names all began with "M" were on what NFL team at the same time?
- (4) What famous third baseman who managed several major league baseball teams once played quarterback for George Halas?
- (5) Boxing's famous Dempsey-Tunney long count came in 1927. What was the NFL's famous Dempsey-Tunney long count?
- (6) How many Heisman trophy winners have become enshrines in the Pro Football Hall of Fame?
- (7) What NFL back averaged 73 yards on four kickoff returns in one game?
- (8) What was the last NFL team to give up the single wing offense in favor of the T-formation?
- (9) What person owns 71% of an NFL franchise and also 100% of an NBA franchise?
- (10) What do these athletes have in common? George Halas, Charlie Dressen, Greasy Neale, Ernie Nevers and Jim Thorpe?

(Answers on page 96)

Trivia—a word that has a meaning all its own for the sports buff. It's a word which could have been listed on our annual page devoted to football terminology.



"Would you believe 63?"

TERMINOLOGY FOR NEW FANS

... AND DAFFYNITIONS FOR EVERYBODY

GAME PLAN—A series of planned maneuvers, on offense and defense, designed to explore a team's own strengths against the anticipated weaknesses of the team to be encountered next.

RESERVE LIST—A list of all the players with whom each NFL team has sole NFL negotiating rights. The list may include active players, players not yet active, injured players or retired players who have not been released.

PRE-SEASON—That time of year between the opening of training camp and the actual start of the regular season schedule of games.

COLLEGE DRAFT—The annual selection meeting in which all NFL teams, on a rotating basis, select college football players who have completed their senior football seasons. The process is repeated for 17 rounds, giving each team the opportunity to choose 17 such players with whom that team has sole NFL negotiating rights.

MULTIPLE FOUL—Two or more fouls by the same team during the same down.

SUPERDOME—New Orleans' new indoor stadium.

ZONE COVERAGE—A pass defense in which, in most cases, each of the seven defensive backs and linebackers is assigned to protect a certain portion of the field against the opposition's attempted pass completion.

LINE BUCK—A straight ahead power play, usually with the fullback carrying the ball.

GAME PLAN—A limping blueprint.

RESERVE LIST—The gait of an imbibing national guardsman.

PRE-SEASON—When the pre blooms.

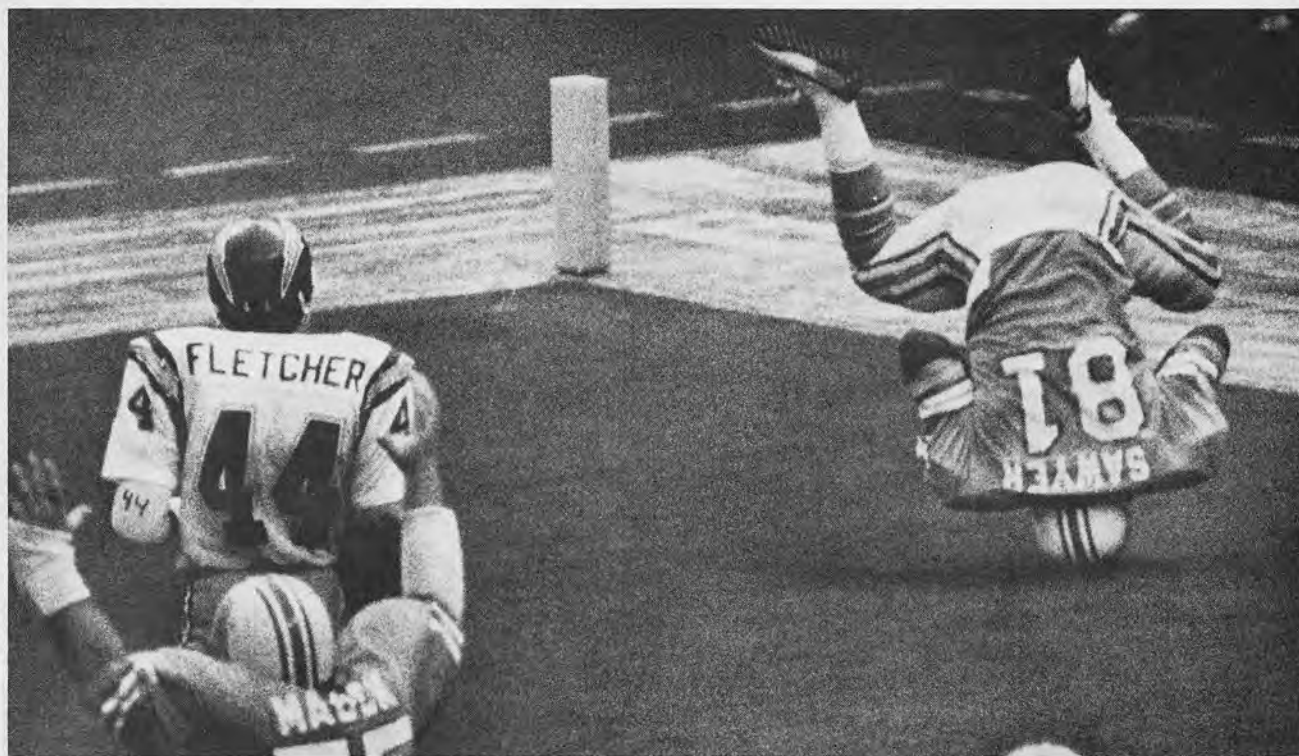
COLLEGE DRAFT—Wind through the dormitory.

MULTIPLE FOUL—Siamese twin ducks.

SUPERDOME—Big headed star.

ZONE COVERAGE—Bra and panties.

LINE BUCK—A laundered dollar, hung out to dry.



HALL OF FAME PHOTO CONTEST
FIRST PLACE WINNER B&W FEATURE
GEORGE HONEYCUTT, HOUSTON CHRONICLE

"Words are double-edged"

Terminology? Daffynitions? It is the habit of modern man to accept a new word or new term if he is exposed to it often enough. Image-makers and sales-concept geniuses know full well the value of hammering home a new term.

When Bob Waterfield and Red Hickey formed a forward passing combination in the NFL in the '40s, there emerged a relatively new element of defense. Occasionally, a linebacker rushed into the offensive backfield to surprise the passer before he could get his throw away. The term "dog" gradually evolved in describing this maneuver, perhaps because of the way the linebacker dogged the heels of the "scrambling" quarterback.

In an NFL game in the '40s, Bob Waterfield and Red Hickey devised a new audible signal. If quarterback Waterfield could read the onset of a dog, he called out to Red Hickey, "Red! Dog!" In essence, those two words said, "Hey, Red. The linebacker is going to dog me, and he's coming from your side. As he does so, he will vacate an area, and if you move into that open area I'll throw to you. But do it quickly before the dog reaches me." Thus the term "red dog," as a description of a breakthrough linebacker, was born.

A few lines above, we used the word "scrambling." In football, it's about a 16-year-old word. It was in 1960, give or take a year, when the writer/producer of a weekly TV highlight show was seeking a variety in terms. Young quarterback Frank Ryan (later a poised NFL title winning QB) was being chased around in his own backfield by charging opponents, time and again, as if in a game of tag. The writer, seeking to vary his copy, started referring to Ryan's moves as "scrambling." The show's narrator (the late Bob Kelley) liked the term, began using it in his play-by-play broadcasts, and another bit of footballese was born. (Later, Fran Tarkenton's broadcasters borrowed the phrase and used it so often that Tark carried the title, "the Scrambler.")

Recently, an extremely popular magazine attempted to create a new word for the dictionary of footballese. In a three-part series on religion in sports, the writer decided that Christianity in sports should be called "Sportianity," a term which many Christians find

demeaning, particularly in view of the anti-Christian perspective which seemed to underwrite the series.

Apparently the writer set for himself an anti-Christian premise before he went to work on his story, then researched with the tunnel vision which is so vital when writing to a strict, pre-research premise. Nowhere in the series was there a true examination of the love, strength, humanity and faith which dominates the lives of millions of Christians, not only in sports but in many other communities.

Was the author trying to say that Christianity in sports is a false profession of faith, created by individuals and groups for ego purposes? Would he apply the same analysis to such strikingly similar, but non-celebrity groups as the FCAP (Fellowship of

Christian Airline Personnel), and fellowships of nurses, businessmen, teachers, lawyers and judges, police officers and many others? Such groups do exist, in large numbers.

The persecution of the original Christian served only to intensify the worshipful posture of his followers. Many Christian athletes are praying that the founder of the word "Sportianity," if he writes on the subject again, will enter his research with an open mind. John and Elizabeth Sherrill, co-authors of *THE HIDING PLACE* for Corrie Ten Boom, sought in other books to write objectively about Christianity. They became strong believers.

It was then, of course, that they really came to understand what constitutes a valid premise in writing about Christians.



"How perceptive are you?"

PETERSEN'S PRO FOOTBALL QUIZ

HOW WELL YOU DO DEPENDS UPON HOW WELL YOU'VE PAID ATTENTION

Time to play 20 questions. Every answer to the following multiple choice questions may be found on the previous 94 pages. But if you're a cheater, or just want to confirm your answers, you can find them all on page 96.

- 1) The new enshrinees (1976) in the Pro Football Hall of Fame do not include
A-Ray Flaherty
B-Len Ford
C-Billy Salley
D-Jim Taylor
- 2) In Super Bowl X, Bradshaw's first quarter TD pass, which tied the game at 7-7, was caught by
A-Troy Duncan
B-Randy Grossman
C-Franco Harris
D-John Stallworth
- 3) The Bears' Wally Chambers played his college football at
A-Grambling
B-Eastern Kentucky
C-Marshall
D-Morehead State
- 4) In 1975, hundreds of PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL readers submitted guesses as to which eight teams would make the NFL playoffs. All eight were picked on _____ of the ballots.
A-15
B-10
C-5
D-none
- 5) The fantastic "Fly for Leukemia" fund-raising project was started by players and front office personnel of the
A-Atlanta Falcons
B-Philadelphia Eagles
C-Philadelphia Flyers
D-St. Louis Cardinals
- 6) The last Philadelphia Eagles team to win the NFL championship did so by accentuating offense under imported quarterback
A-Joel A. Spivak
B-Bobby Thomason
C-Norm Van Brocklin
D-Bill Wade
- 7) An important blocked punt in the early part of the fourth quarter of Super Bowl X was made by the Steelers'
A-Reggie Harrison
B-Gordon Storjohann
C-Lynn Swann
D-J.T. Thomas
- 8) "Forty for Sixty" was the battle cry often sent up by vocal quarterback
A-Joe Kapp
B-George Ratterman
C-Tim Stroman
D-Y.A. Tittle
- 9) A dynamic young middle linebacker who was the defensive hero of Super Bowl X is
A-Chuck Allen
B-Ron Hornsby
C-Jack Lambert
D-Putt Pace
- 10) The original "scrambler" was
A-Frankie Albert
B-Butch Green
C-Frank Ryan
D-Fran Tarkenton
- 11) During the years that he was the owner of the Baltimore Colts, Carroll Rosenbloom hired a total of three head coaches. Ultimately, _____ of them became (a) Super Bowl winning coach(es).
A-none
B-one
C-two
D-three
- 12) The term "red dog" was originated by an NFL quarterback named
A-Bill Wade
B-Bev Wallace
C-Dewitt Wannamaker
D-Bob Waterfield
- 13) According to the Maturity Factor charts, the most experienced team at the end of the 1975 season was
A-Los Angeles
B-Minnesota
C-Oakland
D-Washington
- 14) Ten different teams have played in the Super Bowl. Of the 10, three have appeared only once each. They are
A-Baltimore, New York Jets and Oakland
B-New York Jets, Oakland and Washington
C-Oakland, Washington and Baltimore
D-Washington, Baltimore and the New York Jets
- 15) In 1975, two NFL teams passed more often than they ran. They were
A-San Francisco and Washington
B-Washington and Atlanta
C-Atlanta and New York Giants
D-New York Giants and San Francisco
- 16) The 6th Heisman trophy winner (1940) was
A-Jack Dwyer
B-Clint Frank
C-Yank Gwinn
D-Tom Harmon
- 17) Three NFL coaches have bowl game victories over Woody Hayes to their credit.
A-Don Coryell, John McKay and John Ralston
B-Don Coryell, John McKay and Dick Vermeil
C-John McKay, Dick Vermeil and John Ralston
D-Dick Vermeil, John Ralston and Don Coryell
- 18) According to PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL's Easy/Tough Schedule Charts, one team in the NFL had a decidedly easier schedule than all others in 1975. It was
A-Minnesota
B-New York Giants
C-Pittsburgh
D-San Diego
- 19) According to PRO FOOTBALL ANNUAL's Easy/Tough Schedule Charts, one NFL team has a decidedly tougher schedule than the rest in 1976. It is
A-Minnesota
B-New York Giants
C-Pittsburgh
D-San Diego
- 20) In 1975, the Baltimore Colts won their last _____ games in the regular season.
A-9
B-8
C-7
D-6

OUR ANNUAL PUZZLE

PLUS TRIVIA AND QUIZ ANSWERS

ANSWERS TO TRIVIA

QUESTIONS ON PAGE 92

- 1)—No. 32 (Sandy Koufax, Elston Howard, Cookie Gilchrist, Jim Brown)
- 2)—Hugo Bezdek (Oregon 1914-15, -17) (Rams 1937)
- 3)—Millner, Malone, Masterson, McChesney (Redskins, 1938-40)
- 4)—Charlie Dressen (Bears, as Staleys, 1920)
- 5)—Referee Jim Tunney raised his hands to signal Tom Dempsey's successful NFL record 63-yard FG.
- 6)—None
- 7)—Wally Triplett, Lions, 1950
- 8)—Steelers
- 9)—Jack Kent Cooke (Redskins, Lakers)
- 10)—They all played both NFL football and major league baseball

QUIZ ANSWERS

- 1) C—Billy Salley
- 2) B—Randy Grossman
- 3) B—Eastern Kentucky
- 4) D—None
- 5) B—Philadelphia Eagles
- 6) C—Norm Van Brocklin
- 7) A—Reggie Harrison
- 8) A—Joe Kapp
- 9) C—Jack Lambert
- 10) C—Frank Ryan
- 11) D—three
- 12) D—Bob Waterfield
- 13) D—Washington
- 14) B—New York Jets, Oakland and Washington
- 15) A—San Francisco and Washington
- 16) D—Tom Harmon
- 17) C—John McKay, Dick Vermeil and John Ralston
- 18) A—Minnesota
- 19) B—New York Giants
- 20) A—9

PETERSEN'S 1976 PRO PUZZLE

Eleven players, comprising the offensive platoon of a pro team, were discussing things in the dressing room, mostly talking about the locations of their college affiliations. The RT said, "I played in a state which borders on five states that have ocean coastlines." "That's nothing," said the C, "I played elsewhere and my state is bordered by eight states." "So is mine," said Harry.

The LE said, "I guess Joe and I are the only former college teammates in the room." The FL said to the LE, "Tom and I are from separate colleges, but we both made the All-Big Ten team from the same state, right across the state line from where you and Joe played." The FB said, "You four guys played in two neighboring states, but the other seven of us played in seven separate states."

The TE and Larry were very good friends, but had attended college on opposite coasts. They joined the HB (the only other player from a surfing state) to explain salt water sports to Charlie, whose state borders that of one other player. The QB, from a non-surfing state, rehearsed taking the snap from the man from his neighboring state, then discussed pass patterns with his receivers, one of whom is 6-5, one 6-3, one 6-2 and two 5-11.

Bob, from a surfing state, said to the FL, "Did you get into water sports very much while at college?" The FL replied, "Sure. Water skiing. We were right on the Great Lakes, weren't we, Tom?" Tom nodded. "So were we," said the LE and Joe. Jack and Joe, who belong to the same alumni association, kidded Bob about the very famous non-conference rivalry which has existed between their school and his since the '20s. "Our coach recently came from the pros," said Joe. "And the man I played under just went into the pros," said Bob.

Jim said to Charlie, "After this season, come visit my alumni meeting with me on my campus. It's just across the state border from where you played. And while you're in my state, I'll take you deep-sea fishing in the Gulf."

Tom, Dick and Harry thought they ought to be a trio. Tom and Dick attended college in the same state, but Harry attended elsewhere. Ken and John, both 6-1, were discussing the way the new football feels. It was one especially designed for night ball. Charlie said to them, with envy, "The only time I touch the ball is when I recover one of the fumbles you two make. You get to touch it all the time." The LG said to John, "In the Big Ten, we didn't see a night game ball. We're not owls like you Kansans." Dick, the only other Big Ten alumnus, nodded. So did the other guard, who was from a neighboring state.



Each year we consider abandoning our puzzle and going on to other things, but each year the response increases from those whose puzzle buff instincts rival in intensity those of the 50-yard line fanatic. So, here we go again.

The idea is to take clues from the accompanying story, using only the story itself, a map of the United States and the ability to identify one of college football's greatest rivalries. With the clues, match accurately the eleven first names with the eleven positions found in the story.

If you wish to compare your answer to ours, or if you just want to see how we go about it, send a *stamped, self-addressed* envelope to:

PUZZLE,
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Petersen Publishing Co.,
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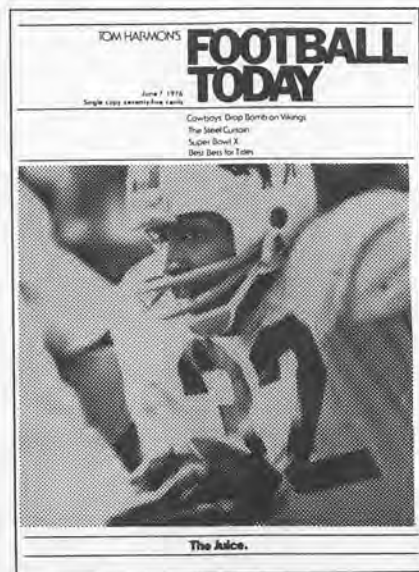
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